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AWAKENING TO LOVE

NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

YOGA YOLU

Narada Bhakti Sutras
Awakening to Love

Serpil Öztürk

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Serpil Öztürk, who has been involved with yoga for 30 years now, studied Bhakti Yoga at Krishna Consciousness ashrams in Vrindavan and Govardhan, India; Vinyasa Yoga, Vedic Chanting, and Yoga Therapy at Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram in Chennai; Ashtanga Yoga in the tradition of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois in Mysore; and Yoga Therapy at the Vivekananda Yoga Institute in Bangalore. She also had the opportunity to learn and practice various styles of yoga in Europe and America.

Serpil Öztürk, who also translated and interpreted the Patanjali Yoga Sutras into Turkish, continues to share the ancient knowledge of yoga with many people while conducting her classes in Bodrum Yalıkavak, where she moved years ago. She also teaches Yoga Philosophy online for many years.

Prologue

Years ago, when I had just begun my yoga journey, I found myself—almost by chance—at a bhakti ashram in India. It was there that I first witnessed the expression of devotion to God through love.

The experience was deeply striking. The residents continuously chanted His name using prayer beads called *mala*, shared stories about Him, and filled their days with rituals—offering every part of their lives to Him. There was no sense of separation, no distance between them and the Divine.

During our time there, I came to understand that love is permeable—it can be felt, shared, and transmitted. I saw that human beings are capable of learning anything, and that love, too, can be learned. So when I first came across the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, I was profoundly moved. There it was—the book of love—right in front of me.

Bhakti teaches those who are naturally open-hearted how to recognize the feeling of love, how to nurture it, and how to guide it along a meaningful path. The divine love described in Sufism mirrors this love for God found in Bhakti. Emerging in the most turbulent and challenging centuries of Anatolia in the 13th century, the Sufi path became a source of hope—one that people turned to with devotion and embraced wholeheartedly.

I taught literature for many years, and Sufi philosophy—along with its rich literary tradition—has always captivated me. While writing this book, my understanding of Sufism came alive once again. The Sufi perspective has been part of these lands for centuries, deeply woven into the cultural fabric of Anatolia. That's why I believe those born and raised here, nurtured by this heritage, have a natural resonance with the wisdom shared in this book.

As in every era, even today, the most essential and transformative force that brings beauty to the world and meaning to our lives is love. This book seeks to illuminate the nature of unconditional, pure love. In doing so, the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* reveal not only love, but also faith, courage, and a deep trust in life—reminding us how truly precious everything is.

While writing this book, I drew upon several sources that explore the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* through different lenses: *Narada Bhakti Sutras from the Vision of Vedanta*, which presents the perspective of Vedanta philosophy; Swami Prabhupada's commentary; Swami Sivananda's interpretation; and, of course, the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Rather than approaching the ancient tradition of bhakti solely through the lens of Hinduism, I aimed to interpret it in a way that speaks to the present day. Throughout this process, I remained faithful to Narada's original text, guided by the belief that the experience of love is universal—existing beyond time, space, or cultural boundaries. My hope was to present these timeless teachings in a way that feels accessible and meaningful to all.

May this book touch your heart and awaken within you a deeper curiosity—and longing—for love.

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About Narada

The Narada Bhakti Sutras is one of the most valuable reference books on bhakti. Since there is no definite information about when Narada lived, his life is entirely based on mythological and mystical stories. Narada influenced all the great masters with the bhakti teachings and served as a source of knowledge and inspiration for them.

According to the stories, Narada had an interesting life. In the life before he became famous as Narada, he was born as the son of a woman who served in an ashram. This ashram was a place where visitors, especially during the monsoon months, came and stayed. Saints from all over the country would gather here and engage in conversations. When he was still a small child, his mother entrusted him with serving the guests. While carefully listening to the conversations, the boy also served the guests with great devotion. Over time, this little boy caught the attention of the saints. They appreciated his interest in knowledge and passed on the teachings to him as well.

One day, Narada's mother dies from a snake bite. Left alone and helpless, the little boy leaves the ashram in tears. He wanders into a forest and falls asleep under a tree. In his dream, he sees Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu says to him, "You will not see me again in this body, but when you leave this body, you will come to me and be close to me there. Your true mission in this world will be fulfilled in your next embodiment." After saying this, Lord Vishnu disappears. Following this dream, the boy is freed from all his sorrows, lives the rest of his life in a state of grace, and after his death, he goes to be with Lord Vishnu.

A long time passes before his new incarnation. When the time comes, he is born into the world as one of the sons of the creator god Brahma, with the name Narada. Because of this birth, he possesses both divine and human qualities. In this incarnation, Narada becomes one of Krishna's most devoted followers. He is a genius in music. He travels across the country singing Krishna's names and speaking about Him. As a speaker, he possesses an enchanting charisma. This is why he became one of the most influential teachers of divine love in his time and for eternity.

Narada, a wandering sage, travels from land to land to awaken people, and one day, his journey leads him to Vyasa's ashram. Vyasa is the great master who compiled the scattered Vedas, divided them into four sections, and presented them as a gift to humanity. Following the teachings of the Vedas, Vyasa welcomes his guest in the best possible manner.

One day, during a conversation, Vyasa says to Narada, "People are in pursuit of liberation. They need to be taught the importance of devotion and surrender. Without these two, there is no salvation. Would you please tell us about the importance of devotion?" Narada replies, "Your students are already quite knowledgeable about this subject. You yourself have explained it beautifully in the Srimad Bhagavatam. But since you now wish to hear it from me as well, I will tell you."

Narada says this and explains bhakti in the form of sutras. With this book, consisting of 84 sutras, divine love and its natural outcomes—devotion and surrender—are described in the clearest and most systematic way. The Narada Bhakti Sutras contain valuable and important knowledge for those who are truly interested in yoga.

Sutra 1

Athato bhaktim vyakhyasyamah

Athato: Now, thus
Bhakti: Devotion to God, surrender, loving connection
Vyakhyasyamah: Will be explained

Now, Bhakti will be explained.

Like many sutras through which sacred knowledge is transmitted, the Narada Bhakti Sutras also begin with the word "atha," meaning "now."

The explanations in these sutras are very special. They are not learned through the use of the mind—by analysis—but are truths that arise in the heart through meditation.

Knowledge gained through reading, listening, and analyzing can vary over time and across different geographies. Intuitive knowledge attained through meditation, on the other hand, is universal and unchanging—supported by sacred texts—and not bound by place or time.

The word "now" is used for this reason. Since this is timeless knowledge that always retains its freshness, it keeps the student anchored in the present moment. Moreover, a student who picks up this book has now reached a level of spiritual maturity and is ready to receive the teachings.

Vyakhyasyamah means explanation or teaching.

Since love is an emotion, is it something that can be taught? Under the guidance of a sacred guru, the dormant potential for love in the heart of a prepared student can be awakened. Once awakened to this natural potential for love in the heart, the student becomes ready to understand the explanations offered in this book.

Sutra 2

Sa tvasmin parama prema rupa

Sa: This (bhakti)
Tu: But
Asmin: Within
Parama: Supreme
Prema: Divine love
Rupa: Form, shape

This (devotion) is the very nature of the supreme essence of divine love for God.

The word bhakti is explained as absolute devotion, dedication, and surrender to God. When we look closely at these concepts, it becomes clear that they stem from the feeling of love, and that love is the fundamental underlying reason. Therefore, the word bhakti is simply defined as divine love for God.

They say, "God is love and love is God." The true nature of a person's relationship with God can be nothing other than love.

Swami Sivananda analyzes the word tvasmin in the sutra by dividing it into two parts: "tu" meaning "but," and "asmin" meaning "within." So tvasmin carries the meaning "but within." One might wonder why the word "but" is used here. This question can be answered as: "not with fear, but with love."

Creating fear of God has been a method used to bring order to societies and guide them onto the right path. In the concept of bhakti, however, there is no fear—there is love. As will be expressed in the following sutras, this love sweeps away and dissolves every other emotion outside of itself.

On the path of enlightenment, there are different approaches such as Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. Each person is drawn to the path that suits their own nature. Although the paths and methods may seem different, in truth, the destination at the end of each journey is the same.

Jnana Yoga means the realization of knowledge. The student finds truth by listening to the guru, studying the sacred texts, and meditating on what has been learned. In the end, all the methods used to realize the truth complete their task and step aside. What remains at that point is only love.

Karma Yoga means acting with the intention of selfless service. On this path, the yogi serves everyone and everything without expecting anything in return. The power behind this enthusiasm for service is the yogi's ability to see God in everyone and everything. They accept this as an opportunity, a gift offered to please God. As the saying goes, "There can be no union without love." Behind every action is love—in other words, everything comes from love. The yogi continues to serve with love until they lose themselves—or rather, until they truly find themselves.

Raja Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga) is based on discipline and is known as the yoga of kings. Ashta anga means the eightfold path. With strong discipline, dedication, and determination, the yogi fulfills the requirements of each of these eight stages. Ultimately, the goal is to transcend the mind and attain liberation. As the mind withdraws, it opens the way to the heart. The heart is the dwelling place of God. In this way, the yogi gradually settles into the house of God. This is the place of peace, freedom, and infinite love.

Bhakti Yoga means the yoga of love. The yogi, without taking any indirect paths, dives straight into the ocean of love.

In Bhakti Yoga, there are two stages: Apara Bhakti (also known as Gauna Bhakti) is the beginner level. The student has recognized love, felt it, and begun to pursue it.

The second stage is Para Bhakti. Para Bhakti is the parama-prema-rupa state mentioned in the sutra. This is the elevated, supreme state of love. Prema means divine love for God. Prema rupa is the embodied, manifested form of divine love. Parama-prema-rupa refers to the expressed form of supreme love. This is the union with God; the melting away of the individual identity and merging into the Divine. This is the realization of yoga.

Sutra 3

Amrita-svarupa cha

Amrita: Immortality
Svarupa: One's own true form
Cha: And

And (bhakti) itself is immortality.

It is said that the force that created the universe is love. The universe was created out of love. For this reason, the feeling of love is the most fundamental emotion inherent in human nature.

When a person is born, due to their karma and ignorance, they become attached to the world and worldly things. In this way, they direct the love within them toward those things. When a person becomes attached to the external world, desires arise. Desire and aversion coexist like two sides of the same coin. The core feeling behind desires, the one that creates them, is the sense of “self” or ego.

“I want this, I don’t want that” is an endless cycle that pervades life. A person becomes tightly bound to worldly existence. From these attachments, countless karmas are created. Thus, the cycle of birth and death turns into a continuous loop. All of this is, in fact, the fruit of ignorance. It is ignorance that gives rise to suffering, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness.

Those who have entered the path of bhakti are individuals who have become aware of their ignorance and have set out in pursuit of a different kind of life. They live in the world, but it is a different kind of existence. The fleeting pleasures and pains that lie on the surface of life do not interest them. Bhaktas (bhakti yogis), in search of something beyond these, have devoted themselves to the immortal—to the ultimate truth. The driving force behind their devotion and search is not the ego, but the love they feel within, a love that continues to grow. This feeling of love has now found its true source and has turned toward It. They have turned their backs on the mortal and, by drinking from the nectar of love, have set out on the journey toward immortality.

Sutra 4

Yalabdhava puman siddha bhavati, amrita bhavati, tripta bhavati

Yalabdhava: When attained
Puman: Person, human
Siddha: Mystic powers
Amrita: Immortal
Bhavati: Becomes, turns into
Tripta: Fulfilled, content

When (divine love) is attained, the person becomes perfect, is now immortal, and has reached complete fulfillment.

In Sutras 4, 5, and 6, it is explained what Bhakti Yoga brings to a person.

The person on the path of Bhakti Yoga is in the highest state of consciousness. This is referred to as the perfection of the human being. Sufi philosophy also dwells on the concept of the perfect human. Here, the person is in full realization of God. They are experiencing supreme peace, serenity, and infinite bliss.

In the sutra, the word siddha refers to the mystical powers attained. In Sufi philosophy as well, there are stories of enlightened masters possessing extraordinary abilities. However, neither great yogis nor enlightened masters have given much importance to these powers, and they have revealed them only when absolutely necessary. In another interpretation, the word siddha may have been used directly to describe the level of yogis who have attained immortality.

Sutra 5

Yat prapya na kinchidvanchati na sochati na dveshti na ra- mate notsahi bhavati

Yat: That person (the one who has tasted divine love)
Prapya: Having attained
Na: Not (negation)
Kinchidvanchati: Desires nothing
Sochati: Grieves, feels sorrow
Dveshti: Feels hatred or enmity
Na ramate: Does not indulge in sensual pleasures
Notsahi: Indifferent (toward material pleasures)
Bhavati: Becomes

Upon attaining it (supreme love), that person no longer has any desires, any sorrow, or any enmity toward anyone. Sensual or material things no longer attract their interest.

When a person feels incomplete or flawed, they seek to cover their deficiencies and feel fulfilled through the offerings of the material world. Desires and cravings arise for this very reason. However, it is impossible to fill the inner emptiness with anything external. That is why desires and cravings never come to an end.

Another way of trying to cover the feeling of inadequacy is the effort to present oneself as superior to others. This gives rise to the duality of “I” and “you,” which not only feeds the ego but also leads to enmity and sorrow.

However, in the eyes of the bhakta, everything and everyone is sacred, so there is no room in the heart for sorrow or enmity. For the one who has realized the Self; separation, hatred, and hostility are replaced by feelings of wholeness, peace, love, and lightness.

Sutra 6

Yatjnatva matto bhavati sthabdho bhavaty atmaramo bhavati

Yatjnatva: Upon knowing Him (having knowledge of God)
Matto: Ecstatic, enraptured
Bhavati: Becomes, turns into
Sthabdho: Still, serene, motionless
Bhavaty: Becomes
Atmaramo: One who is content and blissful through the knowledge of the Self (Atman)

When a person attains the knowledge of God, they are filled with feelings of bliss, fulfillment, and happiness.

God is the source of infinite bliss and peace. When a person is filled with divine love and the knowledge of God, they have reached the source of peace, bliss, and happiness. The deceptive influence of this world no longer has any power over them. The person has attained the truth and has fallen in love with it.

Sutra 7

Sa na kamanayama nirodha-rupatvat

Sa: That (Supreme love, bhakti)
Na: Not
Kamayamana: Transitory desires
Nirodha-rupatvat: Due to the nature of renunciation

The nature of the bhakta requires renouncing transient desires.

The nature of the bhakta is to refrain from everything worldly and material. Yoga is concerned not with the external world, but with the inner world of the person. This is because yoga is an inner journey toward one's own soul. Therefore, in all types of yoga, renunciation and detachment are inevitable.

In Karma Yoga, the goal is to serve. No reward is expected from the service rendered. The yogi is not actually serving people, but through them, serving God. The purpose is to purify, cleanse, and free oneself from ego and pride. Renouncing the results of the service performed is the true nature of Karma Yoga.

In Raja Yoga, the yogi knows that nature is a tool for the soul’s development. The essence of the yogi does not belong to nature. It is the soul, and in order to attain enlightenment, it must transcend nature. As a person progresses on their journey toward their essence, they move further away from the power and influence of nature. In this way, renouncing the external world naturally arises.

In Jnana Yoga, the yogi, through meditation, becomes aware of the impermanence of the external world and realizes that it is nothing but an illusion. It becomes clear that everything visible and the power of nature belong to God. One must pursue not the appearance, but the truth. Therefore, as one gets closer to the truth, nature begins to fade and withdraw. Thus, renouncing the external world arises naturally.

In Bhakti Yoga, no effort or reasoning is required. Its nature is already renunciation. God is the beloved, whose longing is felt deeply, and to whom one eagerly seeks union. In the face of the greatness and power of love, everything worldly loses its influence and attraction.

Sutra 8

Nirodhas tu loka-veda-vyapara-nyasah

Nirodha: Withdrawing (from desires), controlling
Tu: But, at the same time
Loka-veda-vyapara: Worldly or spiritual actions
Nyasah: Surrendering (to God)

At the same time, renunciation means the reduction of all actions, whether worldly or spiritual, and withdrawing from them.

A person cannot stop without being attached to something or engaged in something. Everyone has their pursuits, desires, and attachments. These desires and attachments vary according to the consciousness levels of individuals.

Some are tightly attached to worldly life and the pleasures it brings. These individuals live according to their senses and the guidance of them.

In his book Bhakti Yoga, Vivekananda gives an example: the enthusiasm and appetite of a dog while eating remain the same, unchanged from generation to generation. However, in humans, we see that this pleasure and enthusiasm change. As intellectual experiences increase in humans, the tendency shifts in that direction. The interest in sensory pleasures diminishes, and it transforms into intellectual tendencies and attachments.

Similarly, as a person shifts from intellectual tendencies to spiritual experiences, their desires, areas of interest, and attachments change. They move beyond the five senses; they engage with and derive pleasure from the sacred and the divine. At this point, a subtle and deeply fulfilling joy arises, so much so that sensory or intellectual pleasures completely lose their attraction. This can be compared to the fading of the moonlight when the sun rises, or the disappearance of stars in the moonlight.

As divine love increases, all forms -temples, sacred spaces, rituals- withdraw, because these are external to the person. However, in Bhakti Yoga, a state eventually arises where the inside and outside merge, and everything becomes sacred. For this reason, the person renounces the external world and turns inward, completely withdrawing in order to reach the source of holiness.

Sutra 9

Tasminn-ananyata tad-virodhishu-dasinatha cha

Tasmin: For Him
Ananyata: To be devoted, to be attached with all one's heart
Tad-virodhishu: Those that are contrary to Him, opposing
Udasinata: Indifference
Cha: And

A person who lives with complete devotion to God must avoid everything that is contrary to this devotion.

In Bhakti Yoga and all branches of yoga, the most important thing is for a person to believe in their principles with all their heart, to be attached to them, and to live accordingly. If this is not the case, progress is hindered and delayed. Individuals are expected to organize their lives according to their beliefs, adhering to both their external and internal principles.

For example, crowded and noisy places are not suitable for yoga. A person should structure their entire life, from sleep schedules to meal routines, in a way that serves their yoga practice. A yogi must not neglect their practices and rituals; they should seek out individuals and environments that will help them develop in this regard.

To progress in yoga, an organization and discipline that encompasses all aspects of life is necessary.

Sutra 10

Anyasrayanam tyagonanyata

Anyasrayanam: All other supporting elements
Tyago: To leave, to renounce
Ananyata: To be devoted with all one's heart, to merge

To be devoted means to renounce all external supporting elements.

The most important thing for a person is the feeling of security and knowing that they are supported. For this reason, people hold on to certain things. These can be work, status, material power, family support, or other similar things. However, all of these are external to the person and are situations that can change over time or depending on circumstances.

One can trust money, but deriving one's power from it may lead to loneliness and selfishness. Moreover, the possibility that money may eventually run out always lurks in the background. Family, friends, fame, and reputation... Everything can change and come to an end. Is there, beyond all these changing circumstances, an unchanging, fundamental reality that one can truly rely on?

This is where the knowledge of yoga comes into play. Bhakti Yoga teaches that, in terms of trust, one should turn not to the worldly but to the true source. The subject of this sutra is exactly that. Behind the miracle called life, there is the power and will of God. Strength, peace, wealth, knowledge... He is the source of everything. The only true support for a person in life is absolute faith and devotion to God.

The complexity of life can sometimes lead individuals away from this faith. What needs to be done is to remember what is real and what is not, and for the person to reorganize themselves accordingly. Once they have this awareness and faith, fear and restlessness are completely erased.

Sutra 11

Loka-vedeshu tad-anukulacharanam tad-virodhishudasinata

Loka-vedeshu: Religious and non-religious actions
Tad-anukulacharanam: Being in harmony with Him in actions
Tad-virodhishudasinata: Staying away from all actions that are against Him

To stay away from actions against Him means to always create actions in a way that He would find pleasing.

As we mentioned before, one cannot remain without action. A person takes their place in life through their words and actions. This sutra indicates the attitude a person should adopt in life.

A person living with the consciousness of God should, when night falls and they lay their head on the pillow, review the day and ask themselves, "Did I please Him with my actions today?" To please Him means to act in accordance with nature and its laws. So, what are the laws of nature? Nature is aligned with goodness, justice, and equality.

When a wound occurs in the body, even without any intervention, the wound heals on its own. Healing is a power naturally present within the human being. This shows that nature is aligned with goodness.

The law of karma, which says "you reap what you sow," is an absolute law and an expression of divine justice.

Death is also a phenomenon that speaks of equality, as it removes all separations; because when death occurs, all the differences between individuals disappear.

In fact, nature is a teacher that shows us how life should be lived. Life operates on the principles of goodness, justice, and equality. And the power behind life belongs to Him. A person's actions should be in harmony with nature, and thus with God and the order He has set. One should act not under the guidance of ego or self-interest, but always with goodness, impartiality, and fairness.

Sutra 12

Bhavatu nischaya-dadhyad-urdhvam sastra-rakshanam

Bhavatu: Let it be
Nischaya-dardhyat: Even if the person is enlightened
Urdhvam: Afterwards
Sastra-rakshanam: To continue preserving the spiritual teachings

Even if a person has reached the point of enlightenment, they should continue to practice the spiritual teachings.

Some individuals, thinking that they have firmly established themselves in the teachings, may begin to neglect their personal practices and daily routines. There are many examples of this. However, this is a dangerous and mistaken approach because the allure and influence of the external world are very powerful. A person can drift away without even realizing it.

The daily practices a person must engage in are called sadhana. Not only beginners in yoga, but even those who have advanced in their practice, matured, and even begun to share the teachings, must continue to do sadhana. Sadhana is the practice of reconnecting with one's true essence; it is indispensable. No matter what life presents—whether sweet or bitter—one must not neglect their practice, for life is flowing. The purpose of yoga is to stand firm within this flow, to remain unshaken.

This is achieved through one's personal practice. Regardless of what happens externally, a person should not make excuses, and they should dedicate time to sadhana as if attending an important appointment every day.

Sutra 13

Anyatha patitya sankaya

Anyatha: Otherwise
Patitya sankaya: The risk of falling

Otherwise, there is the danger of falling.

Maya (the power of the world that deceives the person) is very strong. A person can stray from the path without even realizing it. When individuals walking the spiritual path show some progress, they may think everything is complete and abandon the rules and discipline. This situation is frequently observed. In such cases, it is inevitable for individuals to fall backward.

In Chapter 16, Sutra 23 of the Bhagavad Gita, it says: "The person who disregards the teachings of the sacred texts and acts according to their own desires can never attain perfection, happiness, or the supreme goal."

In Chapter 2, Sutras 60 and 62 of the Bhagavad Gita, it says: "Oh, son of Kunti, even the mind of a person who is striving for freedom, and who possesses healthy judgment, is forcibly disturbed by the enticing senses. On the other hand, when a person deviates from the path and focuses on sensory pleasures, they gradually become attached to them, and desires arise. Desire originates from attachment, and when forcibly controlled, anger emerges."

As the Bhagavad Gita also points out, in order to avoid being caught up in worldly pleasures and not to fall back on the path of enlightenment, the desired goal must be kept in mind at all times.

Sutra 14

Loka api tavad eva kintu bhojanadi-vyaparas tu-asarira- dharanavadhi

Lokah: The social environment one is in
Api: Also, even
Tavad: As much as this
Eva: Truly, only
Kintu: But
Bhojanadi-vyaparas: Various activities (such as eating, dressing, sleeping)
Tu: But, on the other hand
Asarira-dharanavadhi: As long as a person has a body

Everyone lives within a social environment where they have duties and responsibilities throughout their lives.

Individuals experience many things in order to mature and grow in life. Through the events that life presents, everyone goes through various situations and environments.

In Sutra 11, it was stated that everyone should live in harmony with the divine and in alignment with it in all their experiences. While engaging in daily activities such as eating, dressing, and working, individuals should always be aware of the reasons for existence in the world.

Building a strong connection with God does not mean forgetting the world or turning away from it. Life should be approached by offering every action to the absolute will, meaning one should do their best in all situations, because life tests individuals through these roles and presents opportunities for growth. These roles can be big or small. For example, roles within the family, in professional life, or among friends are important, emphasized, and significant roles. At the same time, there are also momentary roles, such as those with the person sitting next to you on the bus or the cashier at the store. Since there are no coincidences in life, all roles encountered should be performed with goodwill and love.

Life is an illusion, and everything is transient, but embodiment also holds significant meaning. This is the arena of the sages. One should always keep in mind that we are here to develop, mature, and find perfection.

Sutra 15

Tal-lakshanani vachyante nana-mata-bhedat

Tal-lakshanani: The characteristic signs (of the bhakta)
Vachyante: Are stated
Nana-mata-bhedat: According to different views and perspectives

According to various perspectives and views, the different characteristic traits of the bhakta are defined.

Although the essence is the same, yogis have approached Bhakti Yoga in different ways according to their own experiences. These differences have brought about various practices.

Everyone connects with yoga according to their own interpretation. This is similar to how each person approaches life differently, as yoga is, after all, a personal way of living.

Sutra 16

Pujadisv-anuraga iti parasarya

Pujadisv: Works performed for the purpose of worship
Anuraga: Dedication, devotion
Iti: Thus Parasarya: Son of sage Parasara, famous Vyasa

According to Vyasa, son of Parasara, bhakti is wholeheartedly connecting to God and worshipping Him.

Vyasa interprets bhakti as connecting to God wholeheartedly and expressing this connection by worshipping Him. Worship can be both external and internal. External ones are in the form of sustaining devotion to God through efforts such as celebrating religious festivals, building sacred places or maintaining existing ones, engaging in charitable works, visiting holy places, and beautifying these places with flowers and incense.

The internal one is meditating. Meditation is redirecting the mind from the external world, which is nothing but a dream, towards God. A person becomes attached to whatever they think about, or conversely, thinks about whatever they are attached to. Meditating upon the absolute will is already the essence and foundation of yoga. The goal in all types of yoga is to attain physical and mental strength capable of sustaining meditation for a long period. This requires both diligent practice and great enthusiasm and excitement. By meditating devotedly upon God, the mind and heart become entirely directed toward Him. This experience strengthens one's connection and love for God. According to Vyasa, this is bhakti.

Sutra 17

Kathadisv iti Gargah

Kathadisv: Conversations held about God
Iti: Thus
Gargah: Sage Garga

According to sage Garga's view, devotion to God is always speaking about Him, singing songs for Him, in short, always remembering and describing Him.

Sage Garga here describes the path known as Krishna Consciousness. This is the path of those who follow Bhakti Yoga. There, yogis behave as if Krishna were living among them. They constantly talk about Him. They offer Him the day they've begun, the food they've eaten, and all the actions they've performed. They visit the places where He lived. They narrate stories from Krishna's life as if telling them for the first time and listen as if hearing them for the first time. They sing songs mentioning His name together and with great enthusiasm. They are excited like children, joyful like children. Krishna is like their friend, child, father, or beloved. Their hearts and tongues are always filled with Krishna. They are nourished and enlivened by Him.

In Bhagavad Gita Chapter 10, verse 9, Krishna says: "Those surrendered souls place me in the position of their very lives, and by sharing with each other the ecstasy of devotion to me, they continually speak about my stories, which taste like ambrosia (the nectar of immortality). They constantly taste the nectar of their divine relationship with me according to their inner nature—as servants, friends, parents, or beloved."

Sutra 18

Atma-raty-avirodheneti Sandilyah

Atma: Atman
Raty: Pleasure, enjoyment

Avirodhena: Freedom from obstacles
Iti: Thus
Sandilyah: Sage Sandilya

Sage Sandilya says that bhakti enables one to connect with Atman by removing obstacles and to take pleasure from this relationship.

In Shrimad Bhagavatam, Krishna says: “I am the master of all powers, the goal of yoga, the place where knowledge ends. I am the truth within religions and the teacher of teachers. I reside as the essence in all hearts.”

The Atman mentioned by Sage Sandilya is precisely this essence. Through bhakti practices, the issues occupying the mind that hinder understanding this essence are eliminated. Understanding Him is to feel one's own soul. This feeling initiates a great change and transformation in individuals.

When a person encounters such depth within their own existence, their perspective toward life and events completely changes. Atman exists not only within oneself but throughout all of life. Therefore, everyone and everything is precious and special. Thus, an ever-increasing feeling of relief, peace, and even joy gradually fills the person's heart.

The sutra also mentions this expansion; it states that contact with Atman gradually encompasses all of life and transforms into a relationship filled with pleasure and enjoyment.

Sutra 19

Naradas tu tad-arpitakhilacharata tad-vismarane parama- vyakulateti

Naradas: Narada
Tu: But
Tad: To Him
Arpita: Offering
Akhila: All
Acharata: One’s actions
Tad: To Him
Vismarane: Forgetting
Parama-vyakulata: A feeling of infinite pain
Iti: Therefore, thus.

According to Narada's view, bhakti is both the dedication of all one's actions to God and the deep sorrow one feels upon forgetting this.

After presenting the views of other masters in his book, Narada adds his own interpretation. With Narada’s interpretation included, the meaning of Bhakti Yoga is introduced fully and comprehensively.

The sutra speaks of complete surrender to God. A person who chooses this path should remain aware of sacredness in everything and every situation, performing actions as if in worship without expectation of any personal outcome. Additionally, it involves living everything with complete acceptance; that is, surrendering to the absolute will, not questioning, and accepting without resistance...

In this surrender, there is no fear or doubt. Instead, there is a supreme love that envelops the person from head to toe. One feels such profound devotion, faith, and trust towards the beloved that the only thing to do is surrender. Therefore, even a single moment of forgetting the beloved feels like a betrayal to the lover. “For a yogi, separation from the love of God is the greatest suffering.”

Sutra 20

Asty evam evam

Asty: Thus
Evam evam: Like these

(Bhakti is) as described in the following examples.

In the next sutra, there are examples related to love and devotion, as Narada also describes.

Sutra 21

Yatha vraja-gopikanam

Yatha: For example, such as
Vraja-gopikanam: Gopis in Vraja (in Brindavan)

The love of the milkmaid women called "gopis," who lived in Vraja, is the most beautiful example of pure bhakti.

In this sutra, the love felt by the gopis living in Brindavan (Vraja) for Krishna is described.

Krishna, as an incarnation of Vishnu, embodied to reteach the world about love and loving. The gopis were bound to Krishna with such pure and sincere love that the stories about them inspire everyone who hears them about how exalted divine love truly is.

According to the story, when Sri Krishna starts playing his flute, the gopis are irresistibly drawn toward its sound, as if losing themselves completely. No matter what household tasks they're engaged in, they leave everything behind and run toward Krishna’s flute. They forget their husbands, children, chores—everything.

Krishna sometimes tests their devotion by saying, “Go home and take care of your husbands and children there. Serve them. Connecting to me in your meditations is enough. This will open the path to enlightenment for you.” But they reply, “Allow us to remain by your side. We don't even care about enlightenment. Let us serve you. That alone is enough for us.” With tears in their eyes and with all their being, they plead to Krishna in this way.

Krishna becomes so pleased by these sincere pleas that he divides himself into countless Krishnas. Thus, each gopi feels as if she is alone with Him, playing, dancing, and singing songs together. The gopis become so ecstatic that each one becomes Krishna Himself.

Sutra 22

Tatrapi na mahatmya-jnana-vismrity-apavadah

Tatra: In this situation
Api: Even
Na: Not
Mahatma: Greatness
Jnana: Awareness
Vismrti: Forgetting
Apavadah: Cause

That place (Vraja) is such that even for a moment, it is impossible to forget the light and greatness of God.

When the gopis dance and sing, they are filled with love and the enthusiasm brought by that love. They are fully aware of Krishna's presence that pervades the entire universe, as well as the Atman residing within themselves. Due to the gopis' love, Vraja has become such a magical place that the awareness of Krishna's presence and greatness is never forgotten, even for a moment.

This sacred play of the gopis with Krishna is actually life itself. This play is life. One should perceive life as the gopis perceive it and live joyfully as they did—knowing Him at every moment, never moving away from Him even for an instant, always in His presence, with love and enthusiasm.

Sutra 23

Tad-vihinam Jaranam-iva

Tad-vihinam: Without Him (if He is not the object of love)
Jaranam-iva: Like temporary love or passion between couples

Love without Him is merely a worldly (temporary) feeling.

Love holds a very significant place in worldly life. People experience happiness through love or suffer its pain. Yoga teaches us that everything in life will either end or transform; nothing is permanent. Time changes, circumstances change, and accordingly, the object of love can also change.

This sutra, however, speaks of a completely different kind of love—one that is infinite and unchanging, a love that dissolves a person's ego and makes them surrender their very self; it speaks of divine love.

For example, the love the gopis feel toward Krishna is the highest and purest form of love. They have immersed themselves in the ocean of sacred love and dedicated their entire being to God, in His name and for His sake. At this point, compared to such love, worldly love appears weak, powerless, and shallow.

Sutra 24

Na asthy-eva tasmin tat-sukha-sukhitvam

Na: Not
Asthy: Exist

Eva: Truly, only
Tasmin: In that (worldly love)
Tat: His
Sukha: Happiness
Sukhitvam: Finding happiness

I n worldly love, one cannot find the happiness found in divine love.

In this sutra, worldly love and divine love are again compared.

In the love of the gopis, it is God Himself who is loved. Here, the person has no wishes or desires; there is only one thing they desire—to serve. They find immense happiness in this service. Here, there is no personal gain. In divine love, there is only the wish to make the beloved happy and to rejoice in that happiness.

If love originates from the soul, it is immortal; if it originates from emotions, it is mortal. Because the body and the emotions connected to it are temporary. Worldly love is related to the ego. Therefore, the nature of such love is transactional—a "give-and-take" relationship. When divorced couples are asked about the reason, they often reply, "He/She didn't make me happy." This is an honest answer because one's own happiness is the priority. Everyone expects this from their relationships. When one partner can no longer fulfill these expectations, balance is disrupted. This is the nature of the world, and worldly love consequently develops its own character. Worldly love naturally requires some diplomacy; it is unstable and temporary. Divine love, however, arises entirely from the heart; it is pure and sincere.

Sutra 25

Sa tu karma-jnana yogebhya api-adhikatara

Sa: That (devotion, para-bhakti)
Tu: But
Karma-jnana-yogebhya: From karma and jnana yoga
Api: Even
Adhikatara: Higher, superior

Para-bhakti is a superior path compared to Karma and Jnana Yoga.

In some ways, Bhakti is both a shorter and easier path compared to Karma and Jnana Yoga. Narada describes Bhakti Yoga as the highest path. Krishna also states in many parts of the Bhagavad Gita that the path of devotion, surrender, and love is the most supreme path.

People devote themselves to the partners they are attached to and in love with. They think of their beloved constantly, carrying them everywhere in their thoughts. They wish to please and elevate their beloved. In sincere love, there is trust, and as a result of this trust, there is devotion and surrender. These qualities are inherent in the nature of love. When a person is in complete surrender and devotion, this is the clearest expression of their admiration and love.

Karma Yoga is reached through effort, and Jnana Yoga through knowledge. Bhakti Yoga suits emotional people because love is an emotion. Here, there is no compulsion or effort. Love spontaneously springs from a person’s heart. Without dissolving oneself and surrendering completely, how can one truly realize God?

Sutra 26

Phala-rupatvat

Phala: The fruit
Rupatvat: Because He is the essential form of existence

Because the fruit is the essential form of its (Bhakti Yoga) existence.

There are many paths in yoga, and these paths are based on different methods. Even though the methods may differ, the goal of all of them is the same. This sutra is a continuation of the previous one.

In the previous sutra, the superiority of the bhakti was emphasized compared to other types of yoga. This sutra begins with the word "because." It states that bhakti is a more effective path because, while the other paths ultimately lead to surrender and devotion to God; devotion, surrender, and love are the intrinsic nature of the bhakti. It is said that enlightenment is inevitable for individuals. However, how many lifetimes and through what paths they will reach this destiny depends on their own karma.

Love is an emotion that already exists within a person. This emotion has matured and emerged in some, while it is dormant in others. The emergence of the feeling of love, its embrace, and its guidance is inevitable, yet it occupies different points in everyone's life journey.

The word yoga means union, wholeness. A person first feels their own wholeness. Gradually, they realize that they are whole and complete with their surroundings and with nature, and that there is no separation. In the end, with this unity and integration, a person becomes aware of their relationship with God. This is union, reunion, and the essence of this meeting is love.

The starting point and the endpoint of Bhakti Yoga are both love. Both an inexperienced bhakta and a mature bhakta drink from the nectar of love and move forward under its guidance.

Sutra 27

Eishvarasya api abhimani-dvesitvad dainya-priyatvac cha

Eisvarasya: According to Ishvara (God)
Api: Also, too
Abhimani: To become proud due to ego
Dvesitvat: Not being loved
Dainya priyatvat: Humility arising from love
Cha: And

God does not like egoism. He enjoys humility.

The path of devotion and attachment is superior to the others. Because devotion is surrender, and surrender is the very essence of humility.

The translation of the Sutra states that God does not like pride and enjoys humility. Pride is the feeling of being superior to others. On the path to God, there is no place for duality. There is no distinction between you and me there. The sense of "you and me" created by the ego comes from ignorance. It should be noted that ego and pride are the greatest obstacles standing in the way of a person's enlightenment.

In true love, self-conceit disappears. When divine love arrives, the lover's heart becomes pure. In the face of love, the lover simply surrenders. They are in complete acceptance and surrender.

Sutra 28

Tasya jnana eva sahana iti eke

Tasya: Supreme love
Jnana: Knowledge
Eva: Truly, only
Iti: From this
Eke: Some

Some say that reaching the supreme love is only possible through knowledge.

In this sutra, some great yogis express the view that "In order for individuals to become attached to and devoted to Him, they must know and recognize Him."

Yoga is a noble path. At the end of this path, the goal is liberation. Knowledge is the most fundamental step to be used as a tool on this path. A person must progress by learning.

Some individuals are born already equipped with knowledge due to their karmas. Others are ready to awaken, but they need a guide to reach knowledge.

Knowledge is attained by benefiting from the views of holy individuals, standing by their side, contemplating deeply, and through meditation.

The jnana mentioned in the sutra is such knowledge. It is a type of knowledge that fills the person's heart, transforms their perception, and makes them a completely different person.

Sutra 29

Anyonya-asreyatvam iti anye

Anyonye-asreyatvam: Partnership, being interconnected, existing together
Iti: Thus
Anye: Some

Thus, knowledge of God and love for God exist together.

Having knowledge of God increases admiration for Him and deepens devotion to Him; as devotion increases and one approaches Him, the state of knowing and being certain also grows. In divine love, love and knowledge are always united.

Sometimes, knowledge can weigh a person down. This weight may manifest as seriousness and dignity. However, bhaktas do not carry the burden of knowledge. On the contrary, knowledge lifts the weight of life from their shoulders because, as they approach the truth, they move away from the worldly, becoming lighter. As divine love fills their hearts, they soften, becoming compassionate, understanding, and humble. The feeling of love spreads from their hearts, enveloping their entire being. Yogis who have deepened on the path of yoga and mastered yoga knowledge are cheerful and joyful. Having a cheerful face is a sign of approaching the light.

This sutra both supports and expands upon the previous one. Yoga is a journey, and as a person progresses on this journey, they move closer to both the truth of God and their own essence. The fuel for progress on the path of yoga is love. As one approaches the truth on the path of yoga, love grows. As they walk toward knowledge, they also walk toward love. A true bhakta is a true lover.

Sutra 30

Svayam phala-rupa iti brahma-kumarah

Svayam: Himself
Phala-rupa: Appearing as the fruit
Iti: Thus
Brahma-kumarah: The son of Brahma (Narada)

The son of Brahma (Narada) says, "Bhakti is both the path itself and its fruit."

Bhakti Yoga includes the concepts of devotion, surrender, and love. If there is true love, surrender and devotion arise spontaneously; because all of these concepts create and exist with each other. This is the meaning of Bhakti Yoga.

On this path, both the cause and the result are within each other and are one and the same. The source of the bhakta is love, they walk with love, and the place they are heading to is love itself; there is no higher place to reach. There is no other source that nourishes Bhakti Yoga, because the source is nothing other than itself. Bhakti is self-sufficient. It does not need to grow stronger, nor is it dependent on anything.

All schools, all knowledge are lower in comparison to it. The bhakta has nothing to learn from anyone because the ultimate stage that all teachings can ultimately reach is bhakti.

Sutra 31

Raja-grha-bhojanadisu tatha-iva drishtatvat

Raja-grha-bhojanadisu: In the example of the prince, his palace, and the banquet table
Tatha: In the same manner
Iva: Only
Drishtatvat: As seen

This is as seen in the examples of the prince, the palace, and the banquet table.

The sutra mentions three concepts. These concepts are in the form of a prince, a palace, and a banquet table. Narada has used these concepts in his metaphorical meanings and with these metaphors, he has introduced the next sutra.

First, it is necessary to explain these three concepts. For this, Shivananda shares a story in his commentary: "One day, the king goes hunting in the forest with his young son and a few people from the palace. During the hunt, the young prince disappears. No matter how much they search, they cannot find him. A villager finds the lost prince. The villager takes the child to the village and raises him as his own. While the child lives unaware of his true identity, the fact that he is the prince who disappeared years ago eventually comes to light. They take the prince and bring him back to his father, to the palace. This is a magnificent palace where grand feasts are held. Thus the prince is back to where he belongs."

This is the story, and the metaphors in this story are as follows:
The lost prince represents people who live unaware of their true identities, as if lost.
The king and the palace represent God and being in His presence.
The banquet table symbolizes the deep pleasure of being in God's presence.

What is being described here is how individuals live a life as if they are lost, away from their true place, until they find their true identity.

Sutra 32

Na tena rajaparitosha kshudhasantir va

Na: Negation suffix
Tena: With this
Raja: Prince
Paritosha: To be satisfied
Kshudhasantir: The relief of hunger
Va: Or

With this (only by learning knowledge), a person cannot become a prince, nor can the feeling of hunger be relieved.

When some people come and tell the young villager, "You are actually a prince," this knowledge has no effect on him. Whether he is a villager or a prince does not create any inner or outer difference in him. Because without living it and gaining experience, a person cannot truly learn. For this knowledge to make a difference and for the child to feel like a prince, he must recognize his king father and participate in the magnificent feasts at his glorious palace.

Today, spirituality and yoga are spreading rapidly. People are being taught about the divinity within them, and they are being informed of their divine identities. They are told the value of life and how capable they are, but in order for people to truly learn, they must have their own experiences. Although knowledge may be pleasing to everyone, it is not enough to create a change and transformation within them.

Personal experience is required to create change. Theoretical knowledge is never enough. A person must have their own experience through personal practices.

Sutra 33

Tasmat sa Eva grahya mumukshubhihi

Tasmat: Therefore
Sa: He
Eva: Truly, only
Grahya: To accept, to adopt
Mumukshubhihi: Individuals who desire liberation

Therefore, if a person wishes to awaken to the truth and attain liberation, they should adopt the path of devotion.

The easiest and most reliable path to liberation is the path of Bhakti. While all other paths require effort and work, surrender and love are present within life, flowing alongside it. In other paths, there is a possibility of individuals getting caught up in the conditions of the external world and deviating directly. However, Bhakti Yoga remains within life and sustains its existence along with it.

Bhakti Yoga suits anyone who opens their heart. In the world, the thing closest to a person's essence is their own body. And the heart within the body is the dwelling place of God. Placing one's hand on the heart is a way of connecting with God. In Bhakti Yoga, practicing is as simple and practical as this.

The Chandogya Upanishad says: "The body is a city with a heart. This is the dwelling place of Brahman. Brahman resides in this lotus-shaped home. Whatever exists in the macrocosm, the same is found in the microcosm of the heart. When old age arrives, the lotus of the heart continues to shine. For Brahman resides not in the decaying, changing body, but in the lotus of the heart."

When a person embarks on the path of the heart, they are now on a journey filled with love. The path of love directly leads a person to devotion.

Sutra 34

Tasya sadhanani gayanti acharyaha

Tasya: Of it (the supreme love)
Sadhanani: Practice, application
Gayanti: To sing
Acharya: Teacher

Teachers show methods to students so that they can learn and practice supreme love.

Here, the term "acharya" is mentioned. "Chara" means one who moves towards it, and "guru" means one who dispels darkness. The guru shows the way, while the acharya stays by the student’s side, teaching them how to walk the path as long as needed.

The acharya is a person who has dedicated their life to God. As this person shares their knowledge and experiences, they are always by the side of their students, becoming their inspiration, guide, and role model. The answers to questions like "What is he/she doing?", "How is he/she doing it?", "How does he/she approach life and events?" are of great value to the students. In this way, the student is not only equipped with theoretical knowledge but also learns through living.

Sutra 35

Tat tu visaya-tyagat sanga- tyagac cha

Tat: This (divine love, devotion)
Tu: At the same time, but
Viyasa-tyagat: Renouncing sensual pleasures
Sanga-tyagac: Renouncing material attachments
Cha: And

Bhakti can only be attained by renouncing sensual pleasures and worldly attachments.

We all desire peace, security, and happiness, and we believe these can be obtained from the outside. We think that by acquiring a house, a car, or belongings, or by attaching ourselves tightly to our loved ones, we will achieve peace, security, and happiness. As we accumulate more of these things, we believe we are safer, becoming more and more attached, even fighting for them. In the end, we forget to ask ourselves whether we truly need these things or not. We continue to accumulate, gathering a multitude of things, both necessary and unnecessary. In the process, we become so attached to the external world that we don't even realize we are postponing life, or even abandoning it. Moreover, we express ourselves through these things. With concepts like "my house" or "my car," we create a false ego, getting trapped in an illusion. Thus, instead of finding the peace, security, and happiness we imagined, we actually create more burden and dependency on ourselves.

The sutra offers a warning right at this point. In all forms of yoga, there is a need to renounce, to free oneself from attachments and dependencies. These things are a burden to a person, like chains on their feet. The goal is not to complicate life, but to simplify it; not to make it heavier, but to make it lighter.

If a person's mind is confused and their heart is weary, the wealth they possess is of no use. Moreover, those who are tightly attached to and deeply trusted may, one day, fall out of the picture. For this reason, it is important to know that all the things we own are actually entrusted to us and not to become attached to them. One should not express themselves through these possessions. All spiritual teachings tell us that renunciation is necessary.

"Owner of goods, owner of property
Where is the first owner of this, if any?"

Attachment is inherent in human nature. Bhakti Yoga is about connecting with the absolute power that stands behind everything. Once this connection is made, the source of the hidden treasure within a person is revealed.

Sutra 36

Avyavrita bhajanat

Avyavrita-bhajanat: To worship continuously without interruption.

One must continuously worship without interruption.

In life, if we feel closeness to someone, we want to keep the relationship alive. To do this, we call them often, remember them on special days, and give gifts. We want to nourish and strengthen the relationship. If we are far away, we behave as if there is no distance between us. We share even the small details of daily life with them. Since life is made up of these small things, we want to include the person we love in every moment.

This sutra says that the relationship with God should be like this as well. Rituals are meant to remember Him. After completing Bhakti rituals and sadhanas, it is not about cutting off the relationship with God until the next day. The relationship with God should permeate daily life. Bhakti is about dedicating every day to Him, living with His love, and living in a way that is worthy of Him.

Sutra 37

Loke api bhagavad-guna- sravana-kirtanat

Loke: In the world
Api: Even
Bhagavad: The Supreme, God
Guna: Quality, attribute
Sravana: Listening
Kirtanat: Singing

In daily life, one must always converse about God's attributes and chant His name.

Narada talks about integrating the path of devotion into daily life and focusing the mind entirely on this subject, in this sutra too.

Bhagavad Gita guides us on this matter; in Chapter 7, sutras 7, 8, 9, and 10, it says:
“There is nothing that exists apart from Me. The entire universe is like a necklace of jewels hanging on My neck.”
“I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and moon, the sacred sound OM.”
“I dwell in the pure fragrance of the earth and the brilliance of fire. I exist as the lifespan of all beings.”
“Know Me as the eternal seed of all forms of life. The intelligence of the intelligent and the beauty of the beautiful are Mine.”

God is everywhere and in everything for eyes that see and hearts that are open. Therefore, it is possible to see God in every area of life, everywhere, in everything, at all times, and to live accordingly.

In this sutra, kirtan is also mentioned. People on the path of Bhakti come together and talk about God; they tell stories and sing kirtan. Kirtan is a tradition in which divine love is expressed through music. Here, with the use of various musical instruments, God's names are chanted together in an enthusiastic manner.

Sutra 38

Mukhyatah tu mahat-krpayaiva bhagavad-krpa-lesad va

Mukhyatah: Primarily
Tu: But
Mahat: Great soul
Krpaya: Through grace
Eva: Truly, only
Bhagavad: The Supreme Creator
Krpa: Through grace
Lesad: By following
Va: or

But still, a person can reach the goal on the path of bhakti either by staying near an elevated soul and receiving initiation from them, or through the grace of God.

This sutra states that for personal efforts to bear fruit, the presence of an enlightened person or the direct grace of God is absolutely necessary.

Spiritual knowledge can only be attained through a teacher-student lineage. The presence of a teacher is essential, because spiritual knowledge cannot be gained by reading as if reading a novel. These subjects have layered depths. The teacher gradually expands the student's horizon and sharpens their mind. This is a work that requires patience and continuity. The student must be eager and enthusiastic to progress. Personal effort cannot be denied, but it is the teacher —through their presence, stance, the energy they radiate, and the knowledge they transmit step by step— who holds the student's hand and helps them advance.

Shankaracharya says: "Being in the company of virtuous, wise people frees one from attachments. Freedom from attachments means overcoming delusion. A mind that has transcended delusion becomes calm and strong. Such a mind leads a person to enlightenment."
"To those who come to Me with unwavering love and devotion, I give wisdom."
"I, who dwell in the hearts of all living beings, out of compassion for them, destroy the darkness of ignorance with the shining light of knowledge."

Sutra 39

Mahat-sangah tu durlabho agamya amoghas ca

Mahat: Great soul
Sangah: Association, being together
Tu: But
Durlabho: Difficult to attain
Agamya: Hard to comprehend
Amoghas: Perfect

But it is very difficult to find an exalted, perfect soul and to understand who they are.

In the previous sutra, it was emphasized that an elevated person is essential for progress on the path of bhakti. In this sutra, however, it is stated that finding such a person is very difficult.

The sacred Shankara says: "Three things are rare in this world: to be born in a human body, to desire liberation, and to be under the guidance of a perfect guru."

It is difficult to recognize rare holy individuals because they do not put themselves forward saying, “This is who I am.”

For example, an acharya we encountered at an ashram in India once surprised us in this way. This person, who came to our group and conversed with us, would enchant all of us with his presence the moment he began to speak. He was so unpretentious, so humble in appearance, that the immense contrast between his outward look and the energy he radiated amazed us. Someone who didn’t know him could never recognize the depth of knowledge and wisdom he carried.

Sutra 40

Labhyate api tat krpayaiva

Labhyate: Is attained
Api: However
Tat: His (the Supreme God's)
Krpaya: Through compassion
Eva: Truly, only

(It is possible to encounter a supreme guru) But this can only happen through God's compassion.

In the previous sutra, it was stated that finding a guru who will uplift the person and open the path of bhakti is difficult. Here, however, a reassuring message is given to the reader, saying that when the time is right, the student and the teacher will come together for the student’s spiritual growth.

They say that when the student is ready, the teacher comes to them. This view expresses that there is no such thing as coincidence, and that merit and patience are necessary and important. God, who dwells in everyone’s heart, grants people what they desire according to their devotion and longing. In the fulfillment of their wishes, people's actions, past karma, and the intensity of their desire play a decisive role.

Sutra 41

Tasmin taj-jane bhedabhavat

Tasmin: In Him/There
Tad-jane: In Him and His creations
Bhedahavat: Because there is no difference

Because there is, in fact, no difference between God and His creations.

As stated in the 38th sutra, there is no difference between attaining the direct grace of God or reaching the teachings of a person who is fully devoted to Him in purity; ultimately, both are the same. Because while God says, “Trust in Me, surrender to Me,” the guru also says, “Trust in God, surrender to Him.” Whether the knowledge comes directly or through an elevated being, it is the same.

In yoga, there is a concept called the param-para lineage. This means that knowledge is brought down to the earth from its source through a teacher. Here, the teachers who transmit the knowledge

act as channels with completely pure minds. All the links in the param-para chain are the same; there is no difference between them, because there is no individuality in these links. The ego has vanished, and in its place, the supreme knowledge of God has taken hold. Thus, there is no difference between the source of the knowledge and the one who transmits it in terms of the truth of the knowledge.

Sutra 42

Tad eva sadhyatam tad eva sadhyatam

Tad: This (attaining God's grace)
Eva: Truly, only
Sadhyatam: To strive, to make an effort

One should strive only for this, and only for this.

The master, by repeating the sentence twice, has also summarized the entire book.

The only thing a person must do to attain God's grace is to strive—only to strive wholeheartedly.

The knowledge that effort is valuable and important appears in all sacred texts. In the Yoga Vasistha, the sage Vasistha says to Rama: "Blessed is the one born with diligence. Such a birth is a gift that God bestows upon a person."

Patanjali also states in the Yoga Sutras that enlightenment is the destiny of all human beings, but the time it takes depends on one's effort. He says that those who strive diligently can reach their goal in a short time. In other words, a person should never lose sight of their goal, even for a moment, and should dedicate their life to it.

Sutra 43

Dus-sangam sarvathaiva tyajyah

Dus-sangam: Association with unsuitable (people)
Sarvathaiva: In every sense
Tyajyah: Should be abandoned

In every sense, one should stay away from unsuitable environments and people.

Goodness, love, compassion and honesty are qualities that bring ease to people and fill them with peace and hope. This is what spirituality truly means. As a person awakens to the divinity within themselves, they begin to shape the world around them with these qualities. Those who have progressed on this path and are firmly rooted in it begin to influence their surroundings.

Those who are new to the path of yoga should firmly attach themselves to such individuals and draw inspiration from such environments in order to stay steady. They must be very vigilant in this regard, because people or environments that carry or evoke feelings of ignorance, fear, anger, greed, lust, or jealousy pose a danger. One can unknowingly slip into these emotions.

Here, the question “How can we distance ourselves from negativity around us?” may arise. The sutra includes a warning with the phrase “in every sense.” Yes—no matter who it is or where it is, if it negatively affects the person, it must absolutely be avoided.

Sutra 44

Kama-krodha-moha-smrti- bhramsa-buddhinasa-sarva-nasa -karanatvat

Kama: Desire, Greed
Krodha: Anger
Moha: Delusion, Confusion
Smrti: Memory
Smrti-**bhramsa**: Loss of what one knows, memory lapse
Buddhi: Intellect
Buddhi-nasa: Destruction of intellect, mental confusion
Sarva-nasa: Total ruin
Karanatvat: Causing this, leading to this

Desire, greed, and anger lead to confusion of the mind, loss of what one knows to be right, and the ruin of everything.

In the previous sutra, it was stated that being with those who are distant from spirituality and caught up in the chaos of the world would also affect the individual, and thus such people should be avoided. Here, the subject is further elaborated.

Desires arise either from needs or from external influences. For those on the path of enlightenment, needs have actually diminished, and their interest in worldly matters gradually shrinks. Those who live worldly lives, on the other hand, compare themselves to others. They admire them and want to be like them. Their interests and desires increase more and more. Especially if they evaluate themselves and others based on what they possess, desires turn into passion and greed, and their minds become confused. That’s why they want to have what others have; to eat, drink, travel, and live like them. If they can’t get what they want, they become angry. This state affects their entire life. They become lost in the outer world.

“Tell me who your friend is, and I’ll tell you who you are.” This saying has become a proverb and expresses an absolute truth. Environment and surroundings are extremely important. A person perceives the external world through the senses. The senses, inevitably, shape one’s entire life. The path of yoga requires constant awareness. On this path, one must be very careful and selective while shaping their environment. This is a necessity. Otherwise, the outer world seeps entirely into the person’s inner being.

Sutra 45

Tarangita apime sangat samudrayanti

Tarangitah: In the form of waves
Api: Indeed
Ime: These (desire, anger)
Sangat: The power of material association
Samudrayanti: Turn into an ocean

These (desire, ambition and anger) rise like a wave but (if not prevented) turn into an ocean.

Maya is very powerful. Nature binds people to the world with its pain and sweetness in such a way that it becomes almost impossible for them to open their eyes and realize they are in an illusion. The teaching of yoga is based on a pure and absolute relationship of love. The world, however, has lost its purity and cleanliness due to the rajasic and tamasic qualities of nature.

Even those who have chosen the path of Bhakti Yoga must be very alert to worldly emotions that rise like a small wave in their relationships with the world. Because these small waves can turn into an ocean before they even realize it, becoming something almost impossible to struggle with.

For this reason, the student must be determined and disciplined. Those who understand yoga and are devoted to it must have their own personal practice. Regular practice strengthens the person. And they must definitely apply svadhyaya. Texts that ask the question “Who am I?” should be studied, and the answer should be sought. The answer to this question should captivate and draw them in. In short, people must set everything else aside and turn toward yoga with all their hearts. Only then can they remain centered in the face of the negative people and events they frequently encounter around them. Because they are safe within a strong fortress they have built inside themselves, and the love and knowledge they hold on to protects them.

Sutra 46

Kas tarati kas tarati mayam yah sangam tyajati yah maha- nubhavam sevate nirmamo bhavati

Kas: Who
Tarati: To transcend
Mayam: Illusion, fantasy
Yah: Who
Sangam: Connected to the material
Tyajati: To abandon, to give up
Maha-anubhavam: The wise person
Sevate: To serve
Nirmamah: Free from the sense of ownership
Bhavati: Becomes

Who can transcend Maya? Who can transcend Maya?
Those who are freed from attachment to the material, who serve the wise, and who have given up the sense of ownership...

Narada asks twice in this sutra, "Who can transcend Maya?"

In ancient texts, transcending Maya is considered like crossing the ocean. Samsara, the cycle of birth and death, is an infinite loop that continues until a person is completely liberated from life. Ending this cycle means the cessation of all material desires. All desires must cease, including the desire for liberation. Because wanting something shows that the person does not possess it. However, liberation is the state of being whole and complete.

Narada details the ways to transcend the world of images and says that liberation is only possible by freeing oneself from all attachments. Attachments must be directed towards God or the exalted

beings who represent Him. Furthermore, a person should serve humanity and the environment without any expectations. In this way, they can attract Krishna's attention and compassion.

In Chapter 12, Verses 6 and 7 of the Bhagavad Gita, it is said:
"Yet those who see me as the supreme goal, dedicating all their actions to me."
"And those who, with unwavering love, are devoted to me, I will quickly free them from the cycle of birth and death."

This illusionary world, thought of as a vast ocean, can only be transcended through sincere belief and the merit earned by dedicated effort.

Sutra 47

Yah vivikta-sthanam sevate yah loka-bandham unmulayati nistraigunya bhavati yo yoga- ksemam tjayati

Yah: Who
Vivikta-sthanam: Place of solitude
Sevate: To settle
Loka-bandham: Worldly bonds
Unmulayi: To be freed
Nistraigunya: To transcend the three gunas of nature
Bhavati: To realize
Yoga-ksemam: To gain and protect
Tjayati: To abandon

The person (who can transcend Maya) who lives in solitude in a suitable place, freed from worldly bonds and the influence of the three gunas of nature, and who has abandoned the struggle to gain or protect what they have.

This sutra is a repetition and addition to the previous one. The sutra begins by stating that one must withdraw into solitude. Withdrawal is not suitable for those who are not sufficiently mature. It may lead a person to laziness and neglect of themselves, which is a tamasic state. However, crowds also create environments where human minds are confused, and thus hinder liberation.

As one progresses in yoga, they begin to sense that they are on a completely personal and inner journey. Solitude is a necessary process. Those who succeed in this process have overcome an important obstacle. There is another point to emphasize here: a suitable place for solitude is mentioned. The place is indeed important. People visit sacred places because there is an energy there that draws individuals in, an energy that is rooted. Being in such places, or even living alone there for a while, will undoubtedly create significant inner leaps in the person.

The sutra says that one must be freed from worldly attachments. Everyone says "I" and "mine" and defines themselves by what they possess. However, yoga teaches us that we actually own nothing, and everything we have is a trust given to us. It also states that one must transcend the three gunas of nature, the three qualities. On this path laziness (tamas), competition and ambition (rajas) must be left behind. Satva, the third guna, is the state of being eager to do good and learn. When a person becomes not one who does good but goodness itself, not one who chases after knowledge but knowledge itself, they have transcended satva and become free from all the qualities of nature.

The last point mentions that one should not strive to gain or protect what they have. By “not striving” it doesn’t mean that you don’t provide for your family. On the contrary, a yogi has a deep sense of responsibility and service. What is being conveyed is this: "Work, and work with all your might, but do not attach yourself to the results. Because after working with deep faith and love, and giving your best, the recognition belongs to the supreme power."
Note: For more knowledge on the gunas, see Bhagavad Gita Chapter 14.

Sutra 48

Yah karma-phalam karmani sanyasyati tato nirdvandvo bhavati
Yah: Who
Karma-phalam: The result of actions
Karmani: Material actions
Sanyasati: To renounce
Tatah: From that
Nirdvandvo: Unaffected by duality
Bhavati: Becomes

When a person renounces their worldly duties and gives up the benefits they provide, they naturally transcend duality as well.

A yogi believes that all their needs will be met. But this belief does not mean they refrain from working or performing tasks. They are present in life with all their duties and responsibilities, but they expect no personal gain from any work they do.

Having expectations means creating karma. When people work with an expectation, it naturally leads to a result. Expectation creates a cycle of action and result, leading to dualities such as gain-loss, happiness-sorrow, good-bad. The person in illusion lives within duality.

These people, being attached to the body and the things that come with it, suffer greatly due to the transient nature of the world. Suffering, death, old age, separation, poverty—these are the conditions of the world. Those who live in the world do not understand the miracle that stands beyond these.

As it is said in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12, Verse 17: "He who neither chases pleasure nor avoids pain, who does not grieve for what is unattained, nor is attached to anything—he is beyond both good and evil. He is the one I love."

When we look at a bhakta who lives without creating dualities, impartially and naturally, we see not only the feeling of love that surrounds and governs them, but also fearlessness. Fearlessness is a sign of faith and surrender. This is very important. This is the beauty and uniqueness of yoga. To live fearlessly and with love. With these two concepts, freedom is also defined.

Sutra 49

Yah vedan api sanyasyati kevalam avicchinnanuragam labhate

Yah: Who
Vedan: The Vedas
Api: Even

Sanyasyati: To renounce, to abandon
Kevalam: Pure, unadulterated
Avicchinnanuragam: The continuous, uninterrupted flow of love
Labhate: To attain

When a person connects to God with pure and unadulterated love, eternally, the knowledge and rituals described in the Vedas are completely left behind.

In sutras 46, 47, and 48, the topic of how the world of Maya, or illusion, can be transcended was discussed. Here, this has now been accomplished. The person has freed themselves from all attachments, both physically and mentally, and the necessary transformation in their way of life and perception of the world has taken place.

For those who have realized themselves, even though the Vedas may have once guided them, they no longer find them necessary. Those who enter the path of yoga leave the sources that nourish their intellectual side first. Spiritual books and teachers start to attract them. In the beginning, they jump from one school of thought to another. Some stop in the area they feel most suited to and begin to root themselves there, diving deeper. As they deepen on this path, they come into contact with the Vedas. The Vedas are sources where direct knowledge of God is given, where truth is pointed to.

"One should look at the Moon, not the finger pointing to it."

In the beginning, the presence of fingers pointing to the path is essential to find the way. Guides, teachers, sacred places, books... All of these are very valuable and necessary. When the person's karma and merit eventually lead them to the truth, they realize that there is no reality other than their own, that the source of everything is both within themselves and everywhere. They have become not the seeker of knowledge, but knowledge itself. From this point onward, naturally, even the Vedas are no longer necessary for them.

Sutra 50

Sa tarati sa tarati sa lokamastarayati

Sa: He/She
Tarati: Transcends (Maya or the ocean of Samsara)
Lokamastarayati: Helps the entire world to cross (the ocean)

The person who transcends and goes beyond Maya, helps the entire world along themselves to overcome Maya.

In the previous sutra, those who are freed from the world were mentioned. Although such people are few on earth, their influence is incredibly powerful. Like magnets, they draw humanity toward themselves. Today, figures like the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, known throughout the world, are followed by millions. They are just two individuals, but the impact they spread reaches all corners of the world. Being in the presence of these individuals and receiving knowledge directly from them is a great blessing.

The great yogi Ramakrishna says: "They not only transcend the ocean of the world themselves, but they also help the travelers around them to cross the ocean."

Sutra 51

Anirvachaniyam prema svarupam

Anirvachaniyam: Inexpressible, beyond description with words
Prema: Divine love, love for God
Svarupa: True nature, essence

It is impossible to define the true nature of divine love with words.

Divine love is such a vast and deep concept that it cannot be expressed with words. As Rumi, the great mystic, says in his Masnavi: "The pen was writing smoothly, but when it came to the topic of love, it became unable to continue due to the depth and weight of the subject."

We use words to describe concepts. Abstract concepts can be easily expressed through words. But when it comes to the abstract, especially something that transcends the limits of the mind, like divine love, words become helpless.

We can analyze the concept of love. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad offers us beautiful guidance on this matter. According to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, love is nothing but bliss (ananda). When we say we love someone or something, we are essentially saying that, that person or thing makes us happy. There is no separation between love and bliss (ananda). If we say we are in love with someone, we mean that their existence brings us happiness. Attachment arises from this; we become attached to the person who gives us happiness and do not want to be separated from them.

Bliss (ananda) exists in two forms. The first is the essence and source of happiness. The second is when this original bliss reflects and becomes visible in something external.

Let us first explain the former: Those who practice yoga are aware that we have five bodies. These are: the physical body, the pranic body, the mental body, the intellect body, and lastly, the bliss body. Bliss is our final and largest body that surrounds us. Therefore, bliss is our true nature. Since there is no separation between bliss and love, then love is our true nature as well.

The second type of bliss, or the second type of love, is when the reflection of our true nature becomes visible in an external person or object.

"Your beauty is worth nothing
If not for the love within me."

Aşık Veysel is expressing exactly this in these verses. For love to be visible, it must find a reflection. The feeling of love in the poet's heart is reflected and expressed in the presence of beauty.

I cannot see my own face; in order to see it, I need to look into a mirror. It must be reflected in the mirror so that I can see my face. This is the essence of the matter. Those who say that life is an illusion, a world of reflections, are expressing this idea.

Even describing human love, putting it into words, is impossible. We can only attempt to express this feeling by describing what happens when we fall in love. If it is difficult for us to describe human love, how can we possibly describe divine love?

In the philosophy of yoga, the supreme being is described through three qualities: Sat, Chit, and Ananda. Sat means existence, Chit means consciousness, and Ananda means bliss, love. Sat-Chit-Ananda encompasses all of existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss, which is also absolute love.

When we look closely, we see that the highest expression of our existence, the bliss body (ananda), is filled with the longing for the absolute ananda. This is why, naturally, it is drawn toward it. In a sense, divine love is the reunion of essence with essence. This is also the meaning of yoga, which is union.

Sutra 52

Mukasvadan-vat

Muka: Mute, speechless
Asvadana: To taste, to experience the flavor
Vat: Like

The person becomes like mute in the face of divine love.

When it comes to describing divine love, a person's tongue becomes tied. Just as it is impossible for someone who cannot speak to describe the taste of what they have experienced, so too is the description of divine love equally impossible.

There are times and places where words fall short. Sometimes people try to express this magnificent feeling using words. Is this possible? They say "grand," they say "magnificent"... Can these words be enough?

Sometimes, they remain silent, certain that they cannot be understood. On this, the great teacher Shams Tabrizi says: "I have understood that everything deep and mysterious is silent.
I have understood that everything silent is deep and majestic."

Although divine love cannot be expressed with words, it changes people. These individuals are always joyful and light, they speak little, rush to serve, and serve with dedication. They are in a state of surrender and acceptance. Their eyes are not drawn to the pleasures of the world. They are extremely humble.

Sutra 53

Prakasyate kvapi patre

Prakasyate: To appear, to manifest
Kvapi: Sometimes
Patre: To be suitable, to be fitting

Suitable individuals (to teach divine love) appear from time to time.

Truly dedicated, great bhaktas rarely appear in the world. When they do arrive, they create such a powerful impact with their lives and teachings that the seeds they plant continue to bear fruit forever. The stories about them are passed down from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation, and become legends.

In the lands where the knowledge of yoga originated, the teachings of these great beings still retain their freshness and continue to be a light for humanity. We see these examples in Anatolia as well. Their numbers are not many, but their teachings and influence are so powerful that they have endured for hundreds, even thousands, of years, continuing to guide and lead us today.

Sutra 54

Guna-rahitam kamana- rahitam pratiksana-vardhamanam avicchinnam suksma- taram anubhava-rupam

Guna-rahitam: Beyond all the gunas (qualities)
Kamana-rahitam: Beyond all desires
Pratiksana-vardhanam: Increasing every moment
Avicchinnam: Uninterrupted
Suksma-taram: Extremely subtle
Anubhava-rupam: Something that is felt, inner experience

This divine love is beyond all the gunas, beyond all desires, continuously growing every moment, an extremely subtle and personal experience.

In this sutra, the discussion of what divine love is and what kind of feeling it entails continues. Divine love is beyond the three gunas. It is a feeling that does not carry tamasic, rajasic or sattvic qualities.

In tamasic love, the person desires to possess the one they love, and thus they become jealous and capricious.

In rajasic love, there is calculation; it is a "give and take" relationship. As long as each person meets the expectations of the other, love continues. Once this rule is broken, love ends.

Sattvic love is more refined. The person sets themselves aside, thinking more of their beloved, trying to make them happy. Of course, this is a more developed form of love. However, in this mortal world, even such love will one day be buried in the earth with them. Divine love, on the other hand, is immortal. This subject was addressed in the 3rd sutra of the book.

We know that creation consists of three types of gunas. By the nature of life, all things contain these three gunas. Narada says that divine love is beyond the gunas. The difficulty in understanding and describing divine love comes from this. It becomes clear that divine love is a phenomenon that transcends nature and life itself.

In such a love, the laws of nature no longer apply. There is no personal desire here. On the contrary, for this sublime emotion to come to a person is a great blessing. Those saints who drink from the wine of love become overwhelmed with joy and bliss. This love, which grows and increases, is indescribable because it is entirely personal and an extremely subtle emotion.

Sutra 55

Tat prapya tad evavalokayati tad eva srinoti tad eva bhasa- yati tad eva chintayati

Tad: That / It
Prapya: To attain, to gain
Eva: Truly, only
Avalokayati: Looks upon, observes
Srinoti: Hears
Bhasayati: Speaks
Chintayati: Thinks

Once a person attains it (pure love for God), they perceive His presence in everything they see, in everything they hear, in all that is spoken, and in every thought they have.

To attain the supreme love means to attain the true essence, all of existence, full awareness, and pure bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda). This topic was addressed in sutra 51. At this point, the person has discovered the true source behind the world of reflections, and also how that true source reflects itself. This is a state beyond the mind.

If a person is still operating on the level of the mind, it means they are living under the command and influence of the five senses. In such a case, the mind is restless and confused. While living at the level of the mind, if what they see pleases them or what they hear sounds pleasant, they feel happy. But as soon as the object of happiness changes, so do their emotions. This is a constantly shifting and impermanent state. Life, by its very nature, is built upon duality—opposites. Seeing life through such dualities is, in fact, a superficial perspective. If everything is the same at its core, then God is in everything and everywhere. When a person begins to live in pure love, everything they see, hear, speak, and think in the outer world begins to reflect absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss.

In Chapter 6, Verses 29 and 30 of the Bhagavad Gita, this state is expressed as follows:
“They see the infinite in everything, and everything in the infinite. With consciousness elevated through meditation, they look upon all things with equal vision.”
“For those who see Me in all created beings, I exist everywhere. Those who perceive all life as a manifestation of Me never become separated from Me.”

Sutra 56

Gauni tridha guna- bhedat artadi- bhedat va

Gauni: Preliminary stage
Tridha: Threefold relationship with God
Guna-bhedat: According to the differences in the gunas (tamas, rajas, and sattva)
Artadi-bhedat: According to the various needs and desires of people in the world
Va: Or

The relationship of those in the beginning stage with God is shaped according to their dominant gunas or their personal needs.

What complete surrender and devotion through love truly mean and how they occur were explained in earlier sections. Here, however, we descend from the heights and take another look at the beginner level of the bhakta.

In the beginning, a person's relationship with God is shaped by the distribution of the gunas that dominate their nature and form their personality traits. If tamasic qualities are dominant, the

person's devotion to God is driven by a desire to exert control and dominance over others, even to suppress and force them. If rajasic qualities are dominant, the relationship involves a longing for power and wealth. Here, the person's ambitions and endless desires play a role. If sattvic qualities are dominant, the person seeks support from God to be filled with love, to adapt to every situation in life, and to surrender.

People may also turn to God due to painful and heavy life experiences. For example, a miser may seek refuge in God after losing all his wealth; a person may cry out to God with a broken heart after losing a loved one; or a tyrant may fall to their knees and ask for help when they lose their power. On the other hand, someone may be born with good karma and live a smooth and easy life. In that case, they might become curious to understand the source and truth of the happiness they are experiencing.

In other words, any situation in a person's life can strengthen their connection with God and lead them onto the path of bhakti. This is the beginning stage. Generally, people encounter divine love through these initial experiences and thus set out on the path and the journey.

Sutra 57

Uttarasmad uttarasmad purva purva sreyaya bhavati

Uttarasmad uttarasmad: That which comes after
Purva purva: That which comes before
Sreyaya bhavati: Is better, is more beneficial

What comes later is better than what came before.

In sutra 56, different forms of devotion to God were described.

A rajasic prayer aimed at gaining power and wealth is considered superior to a tamasic desire that could harm others. The sattvic form, however, is higher than both, as it seeks only to be closer to God.

Sattva aims for harmony, peace, and illumination, and for this reason, it is the highest among the gunas. Rajas, which seeks the fulfillment of desires and the pursuit of power, is also higher than tamas, which is completely removed from spirituality.

And as stated in the previous sutra, rather than remembering God only because of suffering or seeking His support due to endless desires, it is far better to explore the true source of happiness and well-being, and to seek connection with God for that purpose. Because most likely, once the suffering ends or the person gets what they want, their relationship with God will be shelved until the next time.

However, those sattvic individuals who aim to understand and draw closer to God have taken the first step onto the right path. This will open the door to the path that will elevate them and lead them to eternity and liberation.

Sutra 58

Anyasmat saulabhyam bhakti

Anyasmat: Compared to others
Saulabhyam: Ease of attainment, easily achieved
Bhakti: Devotion to God, surrender, loving connection

Bhakti is an easier path compared to the others (other types of yoga).

There are essentially four types of yoga practices. These are: Karma Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga (Raja Yoga), Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. Although their names and practices differ, ultimately, all forms of yoga aim to cultivate a calm, peaceful, and focused mind in the practitioner. The goal is to reach the truth and ultimately attain liberation.

Karma Yoga means serving others without thinking of oneself and without seeking any personal gain in the end. Such a practice requires a social setting and opportunities to serve, which may not always be available to everyone in their daily lives or suited to every lifestyle.

Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga is a profoundly majestic practice. The knowledge must be passed down by a guru, and it also requires serious self-discipline, willpower, and determination.

Jnana Yoga is perhaps the most difficult path, as reaching knowledge here is only possible through deep meditation. It requires many long hours and years of practice under the guidance of a guru.

Bhakti Yoga, on the other hand, is a simpler, more accessible, and more comfortable method compared to the paths mentioned above. At the beginning, even having a guru is not necessary. What is needed is simply to direct the love that already exists within the person toward God.

The feeling of love is not only present in humans but is one of the most fundamental emotions found even in animals. Everyone is deeply attached to something. Love is the core emotion in everyone's life. However, many people, due to ignorance, become attached to worldly things such as family, possessions, wealth and fame. Some, on the other hand, believe with all their heart in the One who governs life—God—and live according to Him and with Him. This is a humble, easy-to-practice, and deeply internal approach.

Sutra 59

Pramanantarasya anapekshatvat svayam pramanatvat

Pramanantarasya: Any external proof
Anapekshatvat: Because it is not dependent (on anything)
Svayam: Itself, within itself
Pramanatvat: Because it is its own proof

(To understand the supremacy of Bhakti) No external proof or evidence is needed. Because it is its own proof.

Proof, evidence, witnesses are tools needed to support any statement. People want to get approval from their surroundings to be sure they are on the right path.

Those who are at a beginner level, who have just entered the path of yoga, may also seek proof and evidence to be sure. For example, on basic topics like the wrongness of consuming animal products, the value of breath, the necessity of meditation, the importance of positive thinking, they may want

to research what scientists say and whether this information has been proven. If they are supported by external data, they feel assured that they are on the right path, and they feel at ease.

On the path of Bhakti, people do not need to be supported from the outside. Because even at the very beginning of the path, they feel peace, joy, and contentment within. This state is extremely personal and a matter of feeling. They are so happy with themselves that what others say does not affect them at all. Because they are in direct contact with God, without any intermediary.

Bhakti Yoga is its own proof.

This is the beauty and the essence of Yoga. To live fearlessly and with love. With these two concepts, freedom is also defined.

Sutra 60

Shanti rupat paramananda rupat cha

Shanti: Peace
Rupat: Form, shape
Parama: Supreme
Paramananda: Supreme bliss
Cha: And

Peace and supreme bliss express themselves as bhakti.

People long for a life without conflict, in peace and tranquility. But in a world where the sense of "I" prevails, and people place their own interests above everything else, can we really speak of lasting peace and tranquility?

Those on the path of Bhakti Yoga have already moved beyond the kind of "I" sense mentioned above. In them, the sense of self is structured from the heart. The mind and the heart have united, and the light of the heart has come to illuminate the person's path. People on the Bhakti path allow no room for separation in their hearts. They do not see others as separate from themselves. Everything and everyone is one whole. Behind this wholeness lies the supreme power and will. They are in love with God, and the reflection of this great love encompasses all of life. For this reason, they approach everyone with equal closeness and love. Thus, peace and supreme bliss emerge.

Sutra 61

Loka-hanau chinta na karya niveditatma-loka-vedatvat

Loka-hanau: Due to the sufferings in the world
Chinta: Worry
Na karya: Should not be
Nivedita: Because of surrender
Atma: One's own essence
Vedatvat: Vedic duties

The bhakta feels no worry when faced with a problem, because they live by dedicating both their vedic duties and worldly tasks to God.

A bhakta, while fulfilling the duties and responsibilities in their life, is in constant awareness of God. Whether in religious or worldly matters, they do their very best in all their relationships and duties, and they do not concern themselves with the outcomes of what they do. This means having no expectations, being attached to nothing—in other words, being free.

The concept of not being attached or dependent in yoga is very important. A person should be in life and take on the roles that life requires. The point is to live without attachment, with the awareness that everything is transient, and to be devoted to the unchanging, the absolute.

It is essential to be attached not to people, duties, or roles but only to God. Sometimes problems related to the environment or work may arise. These are the situations in which people are most tested. In such cases, a bhakta thinks like this: “Since God is with me, there is nothing to fear.”

The yogi's attitude is not limited only to worldly relationships. In vedic duties as well, they fulfill their responsibilities with utmost effort and devotion, doing their best. There is no expectation of reward or any personal desire in this either. They are simply an official who has done their job in the most perfect way.

Sutra 62

Na tatsiddhau loka-vyavaharo heyah kintu phala-tyaga tat- sadhanam ca karyam eva

Na: Negative suffix
Tatsiddhau: At the stage of attaining (bhakti)
Loka: Mundane, daily
Vyavaharo: Affairs, tasks
Heyah: To abandon, to renounce
Kintu: On the contrary
Phala-tyaga: Indifference to the results of actions
Tat-sadhanam: Practices, efforts
Ca karyam: Necessity of the practice
Eva: Truly, only

While progressing on the path of bhakti, one should not abandon daily responsibilities; on the contrary, one should continue their duties with complete surrender to God, without any expectation regarding the results of their actions.

A bhakta does not turn their back on daily relationships and duties. They do not see them as a burden or belittle them. A person is responsible to society through all their relationships and duties. What life offers should be met with complete gratitude and thankfulness. Everything, good or bad, has a meaning and function. A person has a debt to life.

If a person cannot please those around them, how can they please God? On this matter, Sri Ramakrishna offers the following guidance: “Whatever you do, always keep the knowledge of God in your heart. A religious life does not mean withdrawing from or avoiding life. In fact, everything is sacred. There is no difference between a temple and a farm, a laboratory, or a studio.”

Thus, Sri Ramakrishna offers a practical path that does not conflict with life or with any religion. A person who carries God in their heart already makes every place they go and every task they perform sacred, no matter where they go or what they do.

Sutra 63

Stri-dhana-nastika caritram na sravaniyam
Stri-dhana-nastika: Sex-wealth-atheism
Na sravaniyam: Should not be listened to (when spoken about)

One should not listen to conversations about sex, wealth or atheism.

External influences can awaken certain emotions lying in wait within a person. Thich Nhat Hanh tells a story like this: "There was a village made up of people living peacefully and happily. The people there spent their daily lives with joy. One day, a rich man came to the village. He had a big and beautiful house built for himself and began to live a lavish life there. As the villagers looked at the homeowners living a different life in that big house, they began to talk among themselves. They started experiencing feelings they had never known before, such as envy, jealousy, and dissatisfaction."

As described in the story, the environment and surroundings one lives in affect people. Therefore, one must be very careful not to be influenced by the environment.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, verse 62 says: "If a person lives for bodily pleasures, they begin to be drawn toward them. From this attraction arises desire. From desire comes passion and anger."

Sutra 64

Abhimana- dambhadikam tyajyam

Abhimana: Pride
Dambha: Hypocrisy, pretentiousness
Adikam: And the like
Tyajyam: To be abandoned, to be left behind

Pride, hypocrisy, and similar traits must be abandoned.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 6, verse 3 says: "Be strong, patient, determined and pure. Stay away from evil and pride. Only then, Arjuna, can you reach the end of the sacred path."

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 12, verses 12 and 13 also say: "Knowledge is better than unconscious worship. Meditation is better than knowledge. But more valuable than these is the complete purification from one's ego and selfish desires through the greatness of one's love for Me. This is true maturity."

"One who thinks well of everyone and everything, who is full of love and compassion, who has given up saying 'I' and 'mine,' who remains the same in pleasure and pain, and who is forgiving."

To progress on the path of yoga, one must possess high character traits. Being completely purified from worldly weaknesses will clear and open the path, and knowledge and devotion will illuminate the way. This is what is required from a person in all yoga teachings. In order to continue on the path with faith and love, one must not get caught in mental traps.

Sutra 65

Tad arpitakhilacarah san kama krodhabhimanadikam tat- min eva karaniyam

Tad: To Him
Arpita: Offered
Akhila: All, entire
Acarah: Actions
San: To be
Kama: Desires
Krodha: Anger
Abhimana: Pride
Adikam: And so on
Tasmin: Toward Him
Eva: Truly, only
Karaniyam: Should be done

Since all actions are offered to Him, then it is appropriate that emotions such as desires, anger, and pride are also directed toward Him.

Yoga teaches that one must be cleansed of endless desires, feelings of anger and pride, stating that this is essential for the purification and stillness of the mind. Is it possible to completely cleanse all the emotions accumulated in the subconscious?

In this sutra, a more practical and direct method is presented. It says that since we perform every kind of action in the name of God and as an offering to Him, then let us also direct our negativities to Him—let Him correct them in our place.

When we are angry, let us turn to God with that anger, saying, "Why are you still allowing me to hold this anger inside?" Or let us say, "Of course I am proud, because you are my beloved." When we do this consistently, the sharpness within us will soften, desires and anger will turn into pleading, pride will be replaced by a sense of gratitude, and in time, all negativities will melt away and disappear.

Sutra 66

Tri-rupa-bhanga- purvakam nitya- dasya- nitya- kanta- bha- janatmakam prema karyam premaiva karyam

Tri-rupa-bhanga-purvakam: Going beyond the previously mentioned three material modes (tamas, rajas, sattva)
Nitya-dasya-nitya-kanta-bhajanatmakam: Serving Him with endless love, as if one were a servant or a beloved
Prema: Divine love
Karyam: Should be practiced
Prema-eva: Only divine love

All the qualities of tamas, rajas and sattva must be transcended and left behind, and what remains should be love—only love. In this way, one should devote themselves to God with divine love, like a servant serving their master or a lover faithfully devoted to their beloved.

A person's relationship with the world and with God is shaped by the dominant qualities of their gunas. This topic was addressed in the 56th sutra. If tamas is dominant in a person, they seek power from God to dominate others and sometimes even to oppress. If rajas is dominant, they desire wealth and authority. Or if sattva is dominant, they want to do good and gain knowledge. In all the gunas, the relationship with God is based on self-interest and ultimately tied to worldly gain.

Transcending the three gunas requires great faith and effort. If, in the end, it becomes possible to go beyond the gunas, then everything changes. At the heart of this transformation lies the change in one's relationship with God.

True bhakti begins here. There are no personal desires left. In true bhakti, there is no worldly goal. The relationship with God is purely in the form of love. There is only love. Desires have been sifted through and let go one by one to reach this point. There is such purity that the person belongs to nothing but God. That person no longer belongs to any nation, any class, any religion or any group. All identities have vanished, all separations have dissolved, and what remains is God—the source of everything.

In Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 18, verse 66, Krishna says: "Abandon all forms of religion and simply surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sins. Therefore, do not despair."

To be freed from the state of asking personal things from Him and to turn toward Him… This is true bhakti. To be like a faithful servant or a devoted lover. The only desire of the bhaktas is to stand by Him, to serve Him, to live for Him.

Sutra 67

Bhakta ekantino mukhyah

Bhakta: One who is on the path of bhakti, a devoted person
Ekantino: One who is devoted with sincerity
Mukhyah: Foremost, primary, leading

Those who serve with devotion, with all their heart and sincerity, take the foremost place among yogis.

Those who live fully devoted to God and are called "Mukhya Bhakti" hold the foremost place among yogis. They have left behind all desires, including even the desire for liberation.

In Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 12, verses 16 and 19, it says: "The person who is pure, diligent, impartial, conscious, whose balance is never shaken, and who has risen above themselves and is devoted to Me is the most beloved person."
"The one who remains spiritually balanced in all circumstances, who is calm, joyful, and at peace, and whose heart is full of love—this world is not their true place. That person is the most beloved to Me."

Sutra 68

Kanthavarodha- romasrubhih parasparam lapamanah pa- vayanti kulani prthivim ca

Kantha: In the throat
Avarodha: Obstruction

Roma: Hairs on the body
Asrubhih: With tears
Parasparam: With each other
Lapamanah: To converse, to talk
Pavayanti: To purify
Kulani: Those present in the environment
Prthivam: The world
Cha: And

Those who have ascended on the path of bhakti, when they speak with each other about God, their throats become choked, their hairs stand on end, and tears flow from their eyes. Those present are so affected by their conversation that they are purified and cleansed of their sins. And even the entire world is uplifted by the energy they create.

As mentioned in the previous sutra, elevated bhaktas are individuals completely purified of worldly desires and endowed with virtues. A person cannot find space in their heart for absolute devotion unless they have fully freed themselves from the worldly turmoil within.

Bhakti is to love God with boundless love. It is such a love that the person sees God in everything. For them, God is everywhere and in everything. Bhakti is to see creation as extraordinarily beautiful through love. This is because the characteristic nature of love is to infuse nectar into everything.

Love infuses nectar into everything. This not only gives life an incredible sweetness but also makes one feel “the infinite”. People become overwhelmed by the greatness of love. When such people gather and converse, the intensity of their emotions causes their throats to choke, their hairs to stand on end, and tears to flow from their eyes. Simply being in that environment and witnessing this is a great sanctification. The elevation created by this conversation transforms people. Those present are no longer the same as before; they are purified, cleansed, and made pure.

This world is actually filled with sins and sinners. If the world is still a place with beauty to be lived, it owes this beauty to the existence of such elevated saints, whose lives are imbued with the love of God.

Sutra 69

Tirthi- kurvanti tirthani su- karmi-kurvanti karmani sac- sastri- kurvanti sastrani

Tirthi: Sacred places
Kurvanti: They create, perform
Tirthani: Sacred places
Su-karmi: Joy-giving actions
Karmani: Actions
Sac-sastri: Sacred scriptures
Sastrani: Scriptures

With their presence, places of worship become even more sacred. Every action they touch turns into a source of joy, and the sacred scriptures come to life through their attention.

The previous sutra ended with the sentence, "Their presence makes this world a place worth living." This sutra is a continuation and explanation of that sentence.

Sacred individuals who have reached the highest level purify, sanctify, and elevate every place and everything they touch or visit.

Shivananda provides an example of this in his book: The goddess of the Ganges River appears before King Bhagiratha one day and complains to him, saying, "Everyone bathes in my waters to cleanse themselves of their sins. How can I purify the sins they leave behind?" The king responds: "Oh noble mother! The holy persons also bathe in these waters. Therefore, you are worrying in vain. They purify the waters and sanctify them because Lord Vishnu, who resides in their hearts, cleanses the water from all sins."

Many places considered sacred in the world are visited as pilgrimages. The sanctity of these places comes from the holy beings who once lived there. Similarly, when people perform the tasks recommended by them, their hearts are filled with peace and joy, and through their interpretation, the knowledge in the sacred scriptures comes to life, continuing to uplift humanity.

Sutra 70

Tan-mayah

Tan: With Him
Mayah: Filled

A bhakta is filled with God.

In the previous sutra, it was mentioned that pure bhaktas sanctify every place and everything they touch or visit. In this sutra, it is explained how this is possible.

The hearts of ordinary people are so occupied with worldly matters that there is no space for God within them. However, a bhakta's entire being is filled with God. Therefore, every action they perform is also carried out with the presence of God.

Since the hearts of bhaktas are filled with God, they carry God with them wherever they go. In other words, wherever the bhakta is, God is there. This is why the bhakta sanctifies every place and everything. Many spiritualists say, "God is within me." However, bhaktas are so completely united with God that they say, "I am God." They are so filled with God that they spread this feeling everywhere, filling every place with it.

Sutra 71

Modante pitaro nrtyanti devatah sa-natya ca iyam bhur bhavati

Modante: To be joyful
Pitaro: Ancestors, previous generations
Nrtyanti: To dance
Devatah: Demigods
Sa-natya: A noble or exalted person
Ca: And
Iyam: This
Bhur: Earth
Bhavati: Becomes, happens

(Because of the arrival of such a being into the world) all his past ancestors rejoice, the demigods dance and the earth too feels protected.

The arrival of a fully enlightened, exalted being into the world carries great significance for his ancestors, the demigods who serve on earth, and the earth itself. The presence of such a person deeply impacts the world. The karmas carried by his family for generations are cleansed, the tasks of the demigods who are here to restore worldly life are supported, and the earth itself receives its share of this joy.

All the pain experienced in the family's past, all the karmas created are replaced with joy and happiness. The souls of the ancestors who have long departed from this world, now find peace and lightness. All sins are erased. The entire past is illuminated.

The tasks of the demigods who are assigned to restore the world and bring relief to people and life become easier. Because they see that they are supported, and that the sinners on earth are turning into good people. They too become so joyful that they can't stay still from happiness, they dance.

The earth is not an inanimate mass of geography. It is a living existence with a soul. Everything has a soul, and everything carries life within. The world suffers and withdraws when it is treated harshly. But when it is valued and treated with love, its fertility and radiance increase, its face smiles.

An enlightened being changes the entire fate of the world, past and future. They bring love, peace and serenity there.

Sutra 72

Nasti teshu Jati- vidya-rupa- kula-dhana-kriyadi-bhedah

Na-asti: Is not
Teshu: For them
Jati: Caste
Vidya: Education
Rupa: Beauty
Kula: Family
Dhana: Wealth
Kriyadi: Work and the like
Bhedah: Distinction

Among such elevated bhaktas; social class, education, physical beauty, family, profession and such qualities hold no importance.

In this sutra, Narada states that among enlightened beings, there can be no privilege or lack. For enlightened beings, there is no hierarchy in the relationship with God.

When seen through worldly eyes, qualities such as social class, education, physical beauty, family, profession and the like, play a defining role in how people are judged. All these traits add either a positive or negative value to them. When looked at closely, it becomes clear that all of these are assessments based on worldly standards. However, in those exalted, enlightened beings who have crossed the ocean of the world, these evaluations lose all relevance.

These exalted beings are individuals who have deeply influenced societies and the entire world. Their coming into this world is a blessing for the world. The above evaluations fall short in the face of their presence. Among these beings, there are those from the lowest class as well as those from the highest class.

Kabir is a weaver, Radias is a sweeper, Sadan is a butcher, Ramakrishna is a guru, Buddha is a prince. Some of these beings radiate light to the world from where they live, while others travel across the world, becoming a source of knowledge and inspiration to people. Some live entirely in seclusion. All of them live their lives in the way their nature calls for. All of them are holy beings.

Sutra 73

Yatas tadiyah

Yatah: Because
Tadiyah: Belonging to Him/His

(There is no distinction among the exalted bhaktas) because they all belong to God.

In this sutra, it is said that enlightened beings belong to God, they are one with God.

In an ordinary approach, people have many worldly things they possess and identify with. They carry an attitude like "the world is one thing, religion is another." In other words, they draw a line between themselves and God, standing apart. This separation is not limited to their relationship with God; based on what they have or don't have, they also draw lines between themselves and other people.

The exalted bhaktas, on the other hand, have no possessions of their own. Everything belongs to God, and life is lived as if it were a continuous act of worship. Just as there is no separation among themselves, there is also no distance between them and God. For this reason, they are all equal in the presence of God.

True bhaktas are considered to be the representatives of God on earth. One must be devoted to them with complete obedience. Respect for a guru is an expression of one's devotion to God.

Sutra 74

Vado navalambyah

Vado: To argue, to dispute
Navalambyah: Should not be engaged in

One should not engage in argument.

Vivekananda writes in his book Raja Yoga: "God and the soul cannot be understood through the sense organs. You cannot see, hear, or touch Him. You also cannot comprehend Him through cause-and-effect reasoning. Cause and effect means reasoning. Yet the concept of God cannot be reached through reason. For some things, the regions of the mind and reasoning are not sufficient."

Since this is the case, matters related to God and faith should never be argued. Argument and dispute eventually lead a person to the point of “What I say is right,” which feeds the ego. In debates, people either say “Your thesis is not correct,” or “My thesis is correct.” Both approaches lead to useless, even harmful outcomes. A yogi should not enter into such discussions and should not be insistent on any subject. It is necessary to stay away from such situations and to avoid speaking with inappropriate individuals.

Engaging in argument tires the mind and drains energy. One should not argue about anything, not just about yoga. However, having conversations—especially with those who share the same views—is beneficial. In such cases, people can freely explore topics in depth within a respectful dialogue and arrive at positive and enriching outcomes. Sharing one's knowledge with others and benefiting from the knowledge of others brings happiness.

Sutra 75

Bahulyavakasatvat aniyatatvac cha

Bahulyavakasatvat: Difference in opinions, diversity of perspectives
Aniyatatca: Indecisiveness, lack of clarity
Cha: And

Arguments do not bring clarity to opinions. On the contrary, it creates confusion.

In the previous sutra, it was stated that arguments and disputes would cause discomfort in a person’s mind. In this sutra, it is further indicated that not only mental discomfort but also greater confusion in ideas will arise.

Arguing or insisting on a particular view not only fails to serve a purpose, but on the contrary, leads to confusion in every sense. Arguing is an expression of the mindset that says, “My view is correct.” At the root of such an approach lies the ego, because the concepts of “I” and “mine” directly point to the ego. The greater the ego, the stronger the insistence.

Yoga teaches us that in all areas of life, we should distance ourselves from the ego and embrace humility. Sometimes, it is better to listen and remain silent rather than speak. One should speak only in environments where words carry weight and bring benefit.

Sutra 76

Bhakti-sastrani mananiyani tad-bodhaka-karmani karani- yani

Bhakti-sastrani: Sacred scriptures that explain bhakti
Mananiyani: To show respect
Tad-bodhaka: To learn through them
Karmani: Rituals, practices
Karaniyani: To be carried out

It is necessary to read the sacred scriptures that teach bhakti and to carry out the practices recommended in them.

One should follow and study the sacred scriptures written on bhakti.

Books such as the Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali Yoga Sutras, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Ramayana, Yoga Vasistha, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana and Narada Bhakti Sutras should be read continuously. This is both necessary and beneficial. First, the person's connection with knowledge remains fresh; second, spiritual books gain different depths of meaning with each reading.

As a person's perception opens and the mind develops, their relationship with the book changes. In this respect, such sacred texts should be read again and again. Since those who interpret these books add their own perspectives, it is also good to learn different approaches. In yoga, one must both learn the philosophy and also put what is learned into practice. The practices advised to seekers in the books that explain bhakti should be turned into regular daily routines.

It should not be forgotten that theory is good, but without practice, theory remains like books sitting on shelves. It is essential to practice and to integrate knowledge into life. In yoga, as in all teachings, the support of a teacher is absolutely necessary. Meeting a good teacher is a great blessing and fortune. But even so, in the end, it all comes down to the individual. The more one works, the further one progresses.

Sutra 77

Sukha-duhkeccha-labhadi-tyakte kale pratiksamane ksa- nardham api vyartham na neyam

Sukha: Happiness
Duhkha: Unhappiness
Iccha: Desire
Labha: Gain
Adi: And the like
Tyakte: To give up
Kale: Time
Pratiksamane: Waiting
Ksana: A moment
Artham: Half
Api: Even
Vyartham: In vain
Na Neyam: Should not be wasted

Happiness, unhappiness, the desire to gain, and such things should be given up. A person should not waste even a moment of their life on these.

In the previous sutra, the necessity of turning knowledge into practice was emphasized. In this sutra, worldly situations that disconnect a person from the knowledge of truth are once again reminded. Due to endless desires, one must stop taking the states of happiness or unhappiness seriously, which are in fact nothing but illusion. Working is good, but one should not get caught up in the ambition to gain and become disconnected from the heart and the truth.

Life is short. Almost half of one's lifetime is already spent in sleep. Childhood and youth are years that pass quickly, distant from awareness. Old age is actually the time of wisdom, but if not attended to, the physical pains that come with aging can occupy a person. For these reasons, only a short time is left for a person to discover themselves and embark on the search for truth. Every moment is valuable, every moment is important. One should not get caught up in the rush of life and waste it;

while taking part in life and fulfilling duties properly, one should not be distant from God even for a moment. This is the true skill.

While running through life, a person must surely take time for themselves and calmly engage in their yoga practices. The energy that will shape the entire day and guide life throughout is generated through these practices.

Sutra 78

Ahimsa- satya- sauca- dayastikyadi- carityani paripalaniyani

Ahimsa: Non-harming
Satya: Truthfulness
Sauca: Cleanliness
Daya: Compassion
Astika: Faith
Adi: And the like
Carityani: Qualities
Paripalaniyani: To be acquired, to be cultivated

A yogi should cultivate qualities such as non-harming, truthfulness, cleanliness, compassion and faith.

In this sutra, the discussion continues on what needs to be done to progress and rise in yoga. Just as a plant needs to be protected from pests and provided with sunlight and water to grow healthily, there are things a person must do in order to grow and develop in yoga.

Above all, a person must not harm any being on earth, including themselves. This is ahimsa. The knowledge that God exists in everything and everywhere, also brings the understanding that no one should be harmed. For this, one must be extremely careful in thought, speech, and action.

Satya means truthfulness, and in many sources it is explained as not telling lies. This is true. But when looked at carefully, it is seen that the ultimate truth is God Himself. There is nothing beyond that. Everything is transient, but God is real. Satya refers to this kind of truth.

Ahimsa and satya support each other. The awareness that the only true reality is God and that His reflection exists in all of creation protects a person from causing harm and from resorting to lies.

A person who does not harm and never deviates from truth has become purified and is clean. The cleanliness mentioned here is of this kind. Of course, people should keep their bodies clean, but true cleanliness lies in a mind free from anything harmful. In such a mind, love and understanding toward all beings naturally reside. A person does not see anyone as separate from themselves and does not wish for anyone what they would not wish for themselves. This is compassion.

The source and fuel of all the qualities mentioned above is faith. Without faith, or if faith is not strong, it is difficult to hold on to these qualities. Faith makes a person a better human being, and goodness strengthens one’s relationship with God and reinforces faith.

All these efforts ease and purify both one’s relationship with the outer world and the path toward one’s own essence.

Sutra 79

Sarvada sarva-bhavena niscintair bhagavan eva bhajaniyah

Sarvada: Always, at all times
Sarva-bhavena: With all aspects of one's being
Niscintair: Those free from doubts
Eva: Truly, only
Bhajaniyah: To be devoted to

Those who are completely free from doubts should always devote themselves to Him with their entire being.

Is it possible for a person to do whatever they do with the thought of Him and dedicate their entire life to Him?

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says: "He is never seen, yet sees all; never heard, yet hears all; never thought of through thought, yet thinks all; never known, yet knows all. He is the witness, the hearer, the thinker. He is the immortal Self within us. And everything other than Him is mortal."

If there is not the slightest doubt within us that "He is the one who created us and is in fact who we are," then the state described in the sutra arises. Since the body is a dwelling place belonging to Him, and life is an environment created by the radiation of His presence, then life can become worship from beginning to end—at all times and with all feelings.

Sutra 80

Sah kirtyamanah sighram eva virbhavaty anubhavayati bhaktan

Sah: He
Kirtyamanah: Being glorified, praised
Sighram: Immediately
Eva: Truly, only
Virbhavati: Manifests, appears
Anubhavati: Is experienced, realized
Bhaktam: By the bhaktas, to the devotees

In the face of sincere prayers, He appears before individuals and blesses the devoted so that they may realize Him.

There is a story directly related to Narada himself on this subject. According to Srimad Bhagavatam, the author of our current text, Narada lost his mother when he was just five years old. After the sudden death of his mother, Narada left home. While wandering around, he grew tired and sat under a banyan tree. There, he prayed with all his heart for God's help. In the book, Narada's own account continues as follows:

"As I was praying to God, a shift occurred in my mind. I felt a great love, and tears burst from my eyes. At that moment, I felt the divine Krishna in the lotus of my heart. Krishna said to me: Oh virtuous one, you are the only one who has seen Me in this form. From now on, your love for Me will

grow even stronger, and as your love increases, your attachment to the material world will diminish. Eventually, you will move away from this painful material world and be with Me."

Narada must have written this sutra based on his own experience. God appears before the bhaktas who are deeply devoted to Him with great love. In yoga, this is called darshan. Darshan means the appearance or vision of the exalted being. It is a great blessing.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 11, Sutra 8 says: "Since you cannot see Me with your ordinary eyes, I will give you divine vision. Thus you will be able to behold My supreme power."

To attain such a great fortune requires deep faith and absolute devotion. This is called merit. Through this merit, being with God becomes the greatest blessing on earth.

Sutra 81

Tri- satyasya bhaktir eva gariyasi bhaktir eva gariyasi

Tri-satyasya: The threefold path of truth
Bhaktir: The path of bhakti
Eva: Truly, only
Gariyasi: The most precious, the greatest

Bhakti Yoga is the most precious among the threefold paths in the search for truth.

The path of bhakti is expressed in life through devotion, surrender, and love. This path not only illuminates the present, but also cleanses all the pain from one's past and completely transforms one's future, elevating their existence to a higher level.

With body, mind and actions, the person has completely dedicated themselves to God. Wherever they go, they carry Him in their heart. Their thoughts and words are entirely filled with Him. And all their actions are dedicated to Him. Such devotion is the highest expression of a bhakta.

Among the main types of yoga, Jnana Yoga teaches the attainment of God's knowledge through meditation, and Karma Yoga teaches purification through selfless service. This sutra states that Bhakti Yoga encompasses all of these paths and that its practice is easier and more practical.

Love is the most comprehensive, the deepest, and the truest emotion. The systematization of this exalted feeling is called Bhakti Yoga. Through love, devotion and surrender, Bhakti Yoga leads individuals to enlightenment in the shortest and most certain way.

Sutra 82

Guna-mahatmyasakti-rupasakti-pujasakti-smaranasakti- dasyasakti-sakhyasakti-vatsalyasakti-kantasakti- atma-nivedanasakti-tan-mayasakti-parama-virahasakt- i-rupaikadhapy ekadasadha bhavati

Guna-mahatmya sakti: Love for God's qualities
Rupa sakti: Love for God's beauty
Puja sakti: Expressing love through worship

Smarana sakti: Constant remembrance of Him due to love
Dasya sakti: Expressing love through service
Sakhya sakti: Loving Him as a friend
Vatsalya sakti: Loving Him as if He were your child
Kanta sakti: Loving Him as if He were your beloved
Atma-nivedana sakti: Surrender due to love
Tan-maya sakti: Merging into Him because of love
Parama-viraha sakti: Loving the pain of separation from Him
Rupaikadhapy: His forms
Ekadasadha: Among the eleven forms
Bhavati: It becomes

Though divine love is one in essence, it manifests in eleven forms. These are:
1- Loving the light God reflects, and His divine qualities
2- Loving His magnificent beauty
3- Devoting oneself to worship
4- Constantly keeping Him in one's mind
5- Serving Him
6- Loving Him as if He were one's friend
7- Loving Him as if He were one's child
8- Loving Him as if He were one's beloved
9- Completely surrendering to Him
10- Renouncing oneself by merging into Him

The sutra speaks of the different forms of divine love. It draws attention to a closeness that goes far beyond the familiar relationship between God and devotee.

For individuals, divine love may shift from one form to another over time or may contain several forms at once. However, what stands out here is that in each form, there is a deep, passionate devotion to Him.

Here, there is never any fear of God. Moreover, there is no doubt or competition. What is present here is only pure, unadulterated, absolute love.

Sutra 83

İti evam vadanti jana-jalpa-nirbhayaeka-matahkumara-vyasa-suka-sandilya-garga-visnu-kaundilya-sesa-uddhava- aruni-bali-hanumad-vibhisana-dayo bhakty-acaryah

Iti: Thus
Eva: Truly, only
Vadanti: They have said
Jana: People
Jalpa: Gossip
Nirbhaya: Fearlessly
Eka: One
Matah: Opinion, understanding
Bhakti: The path of love and devotion
Acharya: Teacher

The great teachers of the bhaktas, such as Sanatkumara, Vyasa, Suka, Sandilya, Garga, Vishnu, Kaundilya, Sesha, Uddhava, Aruni, Bali, Hanuman, Vibhishana and others have fearlessly expressed their views, without being afraid of gossip.

By stating that the teachings of bhakti have been expressed by many great bhaktas, Narada is, in a sense, indicating that he too is supported in his teachings.

The most solid source of knowledge on earth is the Vedas. This is because the Vedas are knowledge directly revealed by God. All sources outside of the Vedas have been presented by humans.

The word "gossip" is used here for this reason. No matter how great, works created by human hands can be flawed. However, the individuals mentioned above are absolutely certain of the truth and value of their teachings. Therefore, they have fearlessly presented their works, regardless of any possible gossip.

All the works written on bhakti are ultimately teachings that support each other and share the same understanding, and there is no contradiction between them.

The teaching of bhakti is explained by God Krishna Himself in the Bhagavad Gita. In the Bhagavad Gita, which is the most solid reference on bhakti, Chapter 10, Sutras 12 and 13 confirm the truth and value of the names mentioned above and the teachings they spread.

"Arjuna said: Oh Lord, You are the highest absolute truth, the supreme refuge, and the greatest savior. Great sages such as Devarsi Narada, Asita, Devala, and Vyasa have described You as the self-manifested, radiant supreme being and the foundation of all-powerful glory. And now You Yourself are personally declaring that this is true."

Again, in Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, Sutra 26, Krishna says: "...I am Narada among the spiritual masters." In this way, He emphasizes the importance of the saint Narada and his teachings.

Sutra 84

Ya idam narada- proktam sivanusasam visvasiti sraddhate sa bhakti-man bhavati sa prestham labhate sa prestham labhate iti

Ya: He who
Idam: This
Narada-proktam: Told by Narada
Siva: Auspicious, holy
Anusasanam: Instruction, teaching
Visvasiti: To trust
Sraddhate: To believe, to be convinced
Sa: He
Bhakti-man: One who follows the path of bhakti
Bhavati: Becomes
Sa: He
Prestham: The most beloved (God)
Labhate: Gains

Those who believe in and trust the sacred knowledge imparted by Narada dedicate themselves to God and attain union with the Beloved. Yes, they attain union with the Beloved.

The knowledge explained by Narada, which is directly supported by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, is very important and valuable.

Those who read this book, are influenced and inspired by what is described here, and thus incorporate bhakti into their lives, have directly earned the chance to be close to the Beloved.

In this matter, Narada gives us assurance. We know that Krishna says, "...I am Narada," so it is also possible to say that this promise was given directly by Krishna. Moreover, Narada emphasizes twice, saying, "Those individuals have attained the Beloved," highlighting once again that the path of bhakti is the most secure path.

The person who reads and understands this book, no matter where they live in the world, their religious beliefs, identity, or gender, is of no importance. Because hearts are one, and the love for God is waiting to emerge in all hearts.

OM TAT SAT

"Think of Me, serve Me, worship Me, surrender yourself to Me; then, you will certainly reach Me.
I give you this promise with sincerity; because you are My dear friend."
Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 18, Sutra 65